

CHILD ABUSE AND THE LAW: THE EDUCATOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

---

A Dissertation

Presented to  
The School of Graduate Studies  
Drake University

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

---

by  
Gerald Sallan  
January 1982

CHILD ABUSE AND THE LAW: THE EDUCATOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

Gerald Sallan

January 1987

Upper Midwest

University of Minnesota

by

Gerald Sallan

Approved by Committee:

Dr. George Lair  
Chairperson

Dr. Paul Vance

Dr. Richard Lampshire

Dr. Carl Shawhan

Dr. Larry Alferink

Dr. Earle L. Canfield  
Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

527099

# CHILD ABUSE AND THE LAW: THE EDUCATOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

An abstract of a Dissertation by

Gerald Sallan

January 1982

Drake University

Advisor: George Lair

The problem. The purpose of this study was to determine what knowledge teachers and other certified school personnel have regarding specific aspects of child abuse and Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law.

Procedure. A forty-one item questionnaire, which was developed by the researcher, was administered to 128 educators (teachers, administrators, and support service staff) in four west central Iowa school districts and in the area education agency (AEA) serving these districts. The data gathered were analyzed for significance at the .05 level of confidence using one-way ANOVA and t-tests for significance between means.

Findings. The data gathered tended to indicate that educators grouped by disciplines did not significantly differ in their knowledge of the specific aspects of child abuse examined and in their knowledge of Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law except in one case. The support service staff appeared to be significantly more knowledgeable about the reporting law than did the teacher group. The four school districts surveyed do not currently have written guidelines that educators could follow when they encounter students whom they suspect of having been abused.

Conclusions. Most respondents underestimated the incidence of child abuse in the United States and knew that over 50 percent of the children who are abused are also attending school (kindergarten and above). Almost all of the respondents knew that certified educators in Iowa are required to report cases of suspected child abuse. However, they were unsure under what conditions they are required to do so.

Recommendations. Three major recommendations were offered. First, educators are in need of additional information regarding characteristics of children who have been abused and of the Child Abuse Reporting Law in Iowa. Second, the boards of education in the districts surveyed should develop written procedures that certified employees would follow when they encounter students suspected of having been abused. Finally, some clarification is needed of what legal responsibilities exist for mandated reporters, e.g., teachers, when the person in charge, e.g., the building principal, fails to forward a report of suspected child abuse to the Department of Social Services.

## CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	v
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Purpose of the Study . . . . .	7
The Problem . . . . .	7
Definition of Terms . . . . .	8
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE . . . . .	13
Incidence of Child Abuse . . . . .	17
Characteristics of Children Who Have Been Abused . . . . .	22
Characteristics of Parents Who Abuse Their Children . . . . .	29
Psychological Evaluation of Parents Who Abuse Their Children . . . . .	37
Child Abuse and Educational Personnel . . . . .	43
Relationship Between Previous Studies on Child Abuse and the Present Study . . . . .	55
3. PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY . . . . .	57
Population and Sample . . . . .	57
The Questionnaire . . . . .	59
Data and Instrumentation . . . . .	60
Analysis . . . . .	61
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION . . . . .	62
Knowledge of Specific Aspects of Child Abuse Results . . . . .	62

Chapter	Page
Results of Knowledge of Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law . . . . .	67
The Existence of District Policy Regarding the Reporting of Suspected Cases of Child Abuse . . . . .	74
Educators Who Have Previously Reported a Case of Suspected Child Abuse . . . . .	74
Comparative Data Between Educators who have Previously Reported a Case of Suspected Child Abuse and Those who have not . . . . .	75
Discussion . . . . .	79
Summary of Findings . . . . .	83
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	86
Conclusions . . . . .	87
Recommendations . . . . .	91
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	96
APPENDIX . . . . .	103

## TABLES

Table	Page
1. Vital Statistics of Participants . . . . .	58
2. One-Way ANOVA of the Knowledge Educators by Discipline have Regarding Specific Aspects of Child Abuse . . . . .	64
3. Percentage of Correct Responses by Educators as a Total Group . . . . .	65
4. One-Way ANOVA of the Knowledge Educators by Discipline have Regarding Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law . . . . .	69
5. Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Tests of the Knowledge Teachers, Administration, and Sup- port Service Staff Educators have Regarding Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law . . . . .	70
6. Percentage of Correct Responses by Educators as a Total Group . . . . .	71
7. Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Tests of the Knowledge Reporters and Non-Reporters have Regarding Specific Aspects of Child Abuse . . . . .	76
8. Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Test of the Knowledge Reporters and Non-Reporters have Regarding Iowa's Child Reporting Law . . . . .	77

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The last major outbreak of poliomyelitis in the United States occurred in 1959. During that epidemic 5,500 children were affected...[and t]he public was outraged; "Why hadn't something been done?"...

[However when i]n 1975 there were approximately 550,000 cases of suspected child abuse and neglect reported in the United States[, ]...the general public was not outraged [and] only a few voices were heard.<sup>1</sup>

Though children have been physically abused and neglected by their parents throughout history, it was not until about fifteen years ago that the professional community and the population at large began to focus their attention on this area.

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has estimated that approximately one million or about one percent of all American children are reported to have been abused or neglected, while the total number of cases that goes unreported is probably equal to this number (i.e., one million) or greater.<sup>2</sup> In 1974 Congress enacted the federal

---

<sup>1</sup>Ray E. Helfer and C. Henry Kempe, Child Abuse and Neglect: The Family and the Community (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1976), p. xvii.

<sup>2</sup>Helfer and Kempe, Child Abuse and Neglect, p. xvii.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, which allocated ninety million dollars over a three year period to facilitate research and demonstration projects.<sup>1</sup> "On the state level, legislation to combat child abuse and neglect has been directed primarily toward the creation of reporting laws."<sup>2</sup> At the present time, every state in the Union has a law for reporting suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. Sussman and Cohen have written a guidebook as an aid to state legislatures in formulating uniform laws for the reporting of child abuse.<sup>3</sup>

In 1965 the State of Iowa enacted its first child abuse reporting law, which required health practitioners (physicians, surgeons, and registered nurses) to report to the Department of Social Services (DSS) suspected cases of physical abuse to an individual under the age of eighteen years old.<sup>4</sup> This reporting law was amended in 1974 to include social workers, certified school employees, certified psychologists, licensed day care facility employees, mental

---

<sup>1</sup>Alan Sussman and Stephen J. Cohen, Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: Guidelines for Legislation (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1975), p. xxiii.

<sup>2</sup>Sussman and Cohen, p. xxiv.

<sup>3</sup>Sussman and Cohen.

<sup>4</sup>Iowa, Code of Iowa, I, Chapter 235(A), Abuse of children, 1966, pp. 896-98.



health care employees, and peace officers among those who were required to report suspected cases of child abuse (viz., physical) to DSS. These professional groups were added along with the list of health practitioners named in the 1965 law as mandatory reporters.<sup>1</sup> In 1978 the categories considered as child abuse were expanded to include sexual and emotional abuse and child neglect, as well as physical abuse.<sup>2</sup>

From the time this latest revision went into effect on July 1, 1978, until the end of 1978, 6,104 cases of child abuse were reported in Iowa, which reflected an increase of 4,480 over the preceding six month period (January to June, 1978).<sup>3</sup> The Iowa State Education Association (ISEA) found that nearly three-fourths of the cases reported in 1978 involved school age children.<sup>4</sup>

Murdock and Gil each found in his study, conducted in the late 1960's, that approximately one-quarter to one-half of all children who were abused in the United

---

<sup>1</sup>Iowa, Code of Iowa, I, Chapter 235(A), 1975, pp. 1131-37.

<sup>2</sup>Iowa, Code of Iowa, I, Chapter 232, Section 67-77, Child Abuse Reporting, Investigation, and Rehabilitation, 1979, pp. 1149-51.

<sup>3</sup>Iowa State Education Association, "They're Crying for Our Help," Communique, XVI (February/March, 1979), 4-5.

<sup>4</sup>Iowa State Education Association, p. 4.

States were of school age.<sup>1</sup> The ISEA finding mentioned previously that three-fourths of the cases reported in Iowa involved school age children might reflect the fact that teachers and other certified school employees in Iowa were forced by the 1974 and 1978 revisions in the law to report to their principals and the Department of Social Services those families in which they suspected abuse had taken place. The ISEA finding should not be taken to indicate that more school age children were being abused in Iowa in comparison with the rest of the nation.

The main point is that a large number of children who are abused and/or neglected are attending our schools. Thus these children are "in almost daily contact with the schools, our major social institution concerned with the well-being and development of children."<sup>2</sup> "As [a] social resource, education is second only to the family in its potential for sustained and thorough involvement in all children's lives."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>C. George Murdock, "The Absued Child and the School System," American Journal of Public Health, LX (January, 1970), 106; David Gil, "What Schools Can Do About Child Abuse," American Education, V (April, 1969), 2.

<sup>2</sup>Gil, "What Schools Can Do About Child Abuse," p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Education Commission of the States, Education Policies and Practices Regarding Child Abuse and Neglect and Recommendations for Policy Development: Child Abuse and Neglect Project Report No. 85 (Denver: Education Commission of the States, 1976), p. 1.

[However], in the past, schools have not actively dealt with child abuse. As compensatory education moves to envelope younger children in kindergartens, preschools and school-related day care centers, the schools' responsibility in identifying, preventing, and treating abused and neglected will continually increase. Teachers, administrators, and other school personnel will need to recognize child abuse symptoms and characteristics and become familiar with appropriate agencies for reporting the suspected abuse. They must also know state and local laws pertaining to child abuse.<sup>1</sup>

The Iowa State Education Association, the Iowa Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and other professional organizations have tried to inform teachers and other certified school personnel of their responsibilities and obligations when they come in contact with a student whom they suspect has been abused and/or neglected.<sup>2</sup> To date, however, no formal study has been conducted which examined the knowledge that teachers and other certified school employees have regarding the Child Abuse Reporting Law in Iowa, of their obligations when they suspect that a student has been abused, of what characteristics to look for in child abuse and neglect, and of child abuse in general.

---

<sup>1</sup>Charles M. Wall, "Child Abuse: A Societal Problem with Educational Implications," Peabody Journal of Education, LII (April, 1975), 224.

<sup>2</sup>Diana Webb, Instruction and Professional Development: Child Abuse (Des Moines: Iowa State Education Association, 1979); Department of Public Instruction for the State of Iowa, Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse: A Model Policy and Rules (Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Public Instruction, 1978).

Only two studies were found in the literature which examined the knowledge that professionals have regarding child abuse reporting laws. Swoboda et al., in a 1978 study of what knowledge mental health practitioners (psychiatrists, social workers, and psychologists) had regarding the Child Abuse Reporting Law in the State of Nebraska, found that 32 percent of the psychologists, 18 percent of the psychiatrists, and 3 percent of the social workers surveyed stated that they were unfamiliar with the child abuse reporting law.<sup>1</sup>

The Iowa Law Review is currently conducting a study of the knowledge and feelings that doctors, nurses, and social workers have regarding the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Statute and factors influencing their attitudes toward reporting suspected cases. The social worker group in this study included school social workers. However the results of this study will not be published in the Iowa Law Review until some time in mid 1981.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Joseph S. Swoboda, et al., "Knowledge of and Compliance with Privileged Communication and Child-Abuse Reporting Laws," Professional Psychology, IX (August, 1978), 453.

<sup>2</sup>Based upon personal communication between Dennis Ballard of Iowa Law Review and the writer, April 1, 1980.

### Purpose of the Study

In an effort to assist children of school age who are or have been abused, it is important that teachers and other school employees recognize the symptoms and characteristics commonly found among children who are abused and be knowledgeable of the procedures outlined in the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law so that appropriate services can be provided to these children and their families. To date, no formal research has been directed at the knowledge teachers and other certified school employees have regarding child abuse and the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine what knowledge these school employees possessed regarding child abuse and the Iowa reporting law.

### The Problem

The problem was to determine what knowledge teachers and other certified employees in the school system had regarding specific aspects of child abuse and Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law. The following hypotheses were tested for significance at the .05 level of confidence.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is no difference between the knowledge that administrators, teachers, and support service personnel have regarding specific aspects of child abuse.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is no difference between the knowledge

that administrators, teachers, and support service personnel have regarding the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law including the educator's responsibility for reporting suspected cases of child abuse.

### Definition of Terms

The definition of terms used in this study were taken from the 1978 Juvenile Justice Act, Division II, Part 2: Child Abuse Reporting, Investigation and Rehabilitation, Sections 232.68 through 232.77.<sup>1</sup>

Child: Any person under the age of eighteen years.  
[232.68(1)]<sup>2</sup>

Child Abuse: Harm or threatened harm occurring through:

1. Any nonaccidental physical injury, or injury which is at variance with the history given of it, suffered by a child as the result of the acts or omissions of a person responsible for the care of the child.
2. The commission of any sexual abuse with or to a child as defined by Chapter 709, as a result of the acts or omissions of the person responsible for the care of the child.
3. The failure on the part of a person responsible for the care of a child to provide for the adequate food, shelter, clothing or other care necessary for the child's health and welfare when financially able to do so or when offered financial or other reasonable means to do so. A parent or guardian legitimately practicing religious beliefs who does not

---

<sup>1</sup>Iowa, Code of Iowa, I, Chapter 232, 1979.

<sup>2</sup>Number in brackets refers to the chapter and section of the Iowa law.

provide specified medical treatment for a child for that reason alone shall not be considered abusing the child, however this provision shall not preclude a court from ordering this medical service be provided to the child when the child's health requires it. [232.68(2)]

Department: The state department of social services and includes the local, county and regional offices of the department. [232.68(3)]

Registry: The central registry for child abuse information established in section 232A.14. [232.68(5)]

Persons responsible for the care of a child:

1. A parent, guardian, or foster parent.
2. A relative or any other person with whom the child resides, without reference to the length of time or continuity of such residence.
3. An employee or agent of any public or private facility providing care for a child, including an institution, group home, mental health center, residential treatment center, shelter care facility, detention center or child care facility. [232.68(6)]

Mandatory and permissive reporters:

1. The following classes of persons shall make a report, as provided in section 232.70, of cases of child abuse:
  - a. Every health practitioner who examines, attends, or treats a child and who reasonably believes the child has been abused....
  - b. Every social worker under the jurisdiction of the department of social services, any social worker employed by a public or private agency or institution, public or private health care facility as defined in section 135C.1, certified psychologists, CERTIFICATED SCHOOL EMPLOYEE [capitalized emphasis], employee of a licensed day care facility, member of the staff of a mental health center, or peace officer, who, in the course of employment, examines, attends, counsels or

treats a child and reasonably believes a child has suffered abuse. Whenever such person is required to report under section as a member of the staff of a public or private institution, agency or facility, that person shall immediately notify the person in charge of such institution, agency, or facility, or the person's designated agent and the person in charge of the institution, agency, or facility, or the designated agent shall make the report. [Mandatory reporters]

2. Any other person who believes that a child has been abused may make a report as provided in section 232.70. [Permissive reporters] [232.69]

Reporting procedure:

1. Each report made by a mandatory reporter, as defined in section 232.69, subsection 1, shall be made both orally and in writing. Each report made by a permissive reporter, as defined in section 232.69, subsection 2, may be oral, written, or both.
2. The oral report shall be made by telephone or otherwise to the department of social services. If the person making the report has reason to believe that immediate protection for the child is advisable, that person shall also make an oral report to an appropriate law enforcement agency.
3. The written report shall be made to the department of social services within forty-eight hours after such oral report.
4. The department of social services shall:
  - a. Immediately, upon receipt of an oral report, make an oral report to the registry;
  - b. Forward a copy of the written report to the registry; and
  - c. Notify the appropriate county attorney of the receipt of any report.
5. The oral and written reports shall contain the following information, or as much as thereof as the person making the report is able to furnish:
  - a. The names and home address of the child and his parents or other person believed to be responsible for his care;



- b. The child's present whereabouts if not the same as the parent's or other person's home address;
  - c. The child's age;
  - d. The nature and extent of the child's injuries, including any evidence of previous injuries;
  - e. The name, age, and condition of other children in the same home;
  - f. Any other information which the person making the report believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injury to the child, the identity of the person or persons responsible for the injury, or in providing assistance to the child; and
  - g. The name and address of the person making the report.
6. A report made by a permissive reporter, as defined in section 232.69, subsection 2, shall be regarded as a report pursuant to this chapter whether or not the report contains all of the information required by this section and may be made to the department of social services, county attorney, or law enforcement agency. If the report is made to any agency other than the department of social services, such agency shall promptly refer the report to the department of social services. [232.70]

Sanctions for failure to report:

- 1. Any person, official, agency or institution, required by this chapter to report a suspected case of child abuse who knowingly and willfully fails to do so is guilty of a simple misdemeanor [imprisonment not to exceed thirty days or not to exceed a fine of one hundred dollars].<sup>1</sup>
- 2. Any person, official, agency or institution, required by section 232.69 to report a suspected case of child abuse who knowingly fails to do so is civilly liable for the damages proximately caused by such failure. [232.75]

---

<sup>1</sup>Iowa, Code of Iowa, III, Chapter 903, 1979.

Immunity from liability: Anyone participating in good faith in the making of a report or photographs or X-rays pursuant to this chapter shall have immunity for any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Any such participant shall have the same immunity with respect to participation in good faith in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report or relating to subject matter of such report. [232.73]

Photograph and X-rays: Any person who is required to report a case of child abuse may take or cause to be taken, at public expense, photographs or X-rays of the areas if trauma visible on a child....Any person who takes any photographs or X-rays pursuant to this section shall notify the department of social services that such photographs or X-rays have been taken, and shall retain such photographs or X-rays for a reasonable time thereafter. Whenever such person is required to report under section 232.69, in that person's capacity as a member of the staff of a medical or other private or public institution, agency, or facility, that person shall immediately notify the person in charge of such institution, agency, or facility or that person's designated delegate of the need for photographs or X-rays. [232.77]

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

"Over the centuries children have been killed, maimed, starved, abandoned, neglected and chastised with cruelty. Despite this the maltreatment of children by their parents" throughout history, has only recently aroused public concern.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, in 1874, Mary Ellen's (an eleven-year-old girl) neighbors became so alarmed when they learned that she was being beaten and chained to her bed by her adoptive father that they tried without avail to get some assistance from the local police. As the local authorities could not find anything in the law to prevent this type of "disciplining," they were powerless to intervene. Finally, her neighbors appealed to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to intercede on the pretext that Mary Ellen was a member of the animal kingdom and was being maltreated. Thus the organization was able to remove Mary Ellen from this abusive environment. Later in 1874, the Society

---

<sup>1</sup>Selwyn M. Smith, The Battered Child Syndrome  
(London: Butterworths, 1975), p. 3.

for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was founded.<sup>1</sup>

Kellum discussed the existence of massive infanticide during the middle ages. Langer wrote that except among Christians and Jews, infanticide has from time immemorial been an accepted procedure for disposing not only of deformed or sickly infants, but of all such newborns as might strain the resources of the individual family or the larger community.<sup>2</sup>

Today some societies still practice infanticide when a deformed baby is born or as a result of an accident.

Probably Ambroise Tardieu, a French specialist in forensic medicine, was the first to formally describe the medicosocial phenomenon of the maltreated child in "Etude Medico-Legale de Blessures" (Medicological Study of Wounds) in 1860.<sup>3</sup> The first case description in England of a battered child was read by Samuel West at a meeting of the Medical Society of London in 1888. He called his paper "Acute Periosteal Swelling in Several Young Infants of the Same Family Probably Richety in Nature."<sup>4</sup>

While periodical mention of child abuse occurred in the literature over the next eighty years, it was not until

---

<sup>1</sup>Wayne V. Adams, "The Physically Abused Child: A Review," Pediatric Psychology, I (Spring, 1976), 7.

<sup>2</sup>Mary H. Lystad, "Violence at Home: A Review of the Literature," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, XLV (April, 1975), 333.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>Smith, p. 21.

Helfer and Kempe published their book, The Battered Child, in 1968, that professional attention was directly focused upon abuse and neglect of children in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Since that date, almost every professional medical and social science journal has included articles describing child abuse and the neglect of children's needs.

Helfer and Kempe have estimated that 25 percent of all fractures occurring during the first two years of life and 10 to 15 percent of all traumas occurring under the age of three are due to abuse by an adult.<sup>2</sup> Although there has been no long term prospective studies of the consequences and sequelae of child abuse, Martin's short-term study of children who had been abused found that permanent damage to the brain is a frequent sequela of physical abuse. Forty-three percent of his sample showed neurological abnormalities at follow-up examination. Sixty-six percent of these children had obvious neurological impairments, hemiparesis, focal seizures, optic atrophy, and pathological primitive reflexes. The other 33 percent had more subtle signs, which included various "soft" neurological findings

---

<sup>1</sup>Ray E. Helfer and C. Henry Kempe, The Battered Child (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

<sup>2</sup>Helfer and Kempe, The Battered Child, p. 6.

with minimal brain dysfunction.<sup>1</sup>

Various theories to explain why parents who abuse and neglect their children have been offered. Some authors have suggested that the parents are severely emotionally ill, while others mentioned that child abuse is a factor of the stressful environment one must face on a daily basis in the lower social economic classes. Helfer and Kempe have stated instead that child abuse occurs in all social classes and strata.<sup>2</sup> Recent observations have suggested that battering parents are not confined to any particular type, intellectual level, or social class.<sup>3</sup> "Child abuse is psychodynamically related and has nothing to do with race, color, creed, sex, income, education, or anything else."<sup>4</sup>

David Gil has suggested that one of the reasons for child abuse in the United States has been due to our violent cultural norm of relating to each other and child rearing

---

<sup>1</sup>Harold Martin, "The Child and His Development," Helping the Battered Child and His Family, eds. C. Henry Kempe and Ray E. Helfer (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1972), p. 98.

<sup>2</sup>Helfer and Kempe, Child Abuse and Neglect, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup>Bertice F. Steele and Carl B. Pollock, "A Psychiatric Study of Parents who Abuse Infants and Small Children," The Battered Child, eds. Helfer and Kempe, pp. 106-107.

<sup>4</sup>C. Henry Kempe, "The Battered Child and the Hospital," Hospital Practice, IV (October, 1969), 45-46.

practices of allowing the use of a certain amount of physical force toward children by adults caring for them. "Such trends seem to be encouraged by some professional experts in child rearing, education, and medicine, and by some members of the press, radio, and television."<sup>1</sup> Such sayings as "spare the rod and spoil the child" and "give him the hickory stick" seem to attest to how prevalent physical disciplining and other such common advice methods are part of our commonly accepted practice of rearing children.

Gil in his 1973 book pointed out that children were not protected by the law in our society against bodily attack in the same way as adults were.<sup>2</sup> In fact it was not until a couple of years ago that children were recognized as individuals with legal rights by our courts.

#### Incidence of Child Abuse

While the exact incidence of child abuse in the United States and the other countries of the world is not known, many authors have attested to the fact that child abuse occurs in almost every country and culture in the

---

<sup>1</sup>Lystad, p. 331.

<sup>2</sup>David G. Gil, Violence Against Children: Physical Abuse in the United States (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 8-9.

world.

Zalba has estimated that there are between 200,000 and 250,000 children in the United States needing protection against serious physical abuse, and Gil has shown that 3 to 4 percent of the adults in the United States personally know of a case of child abuse or neglect.<sup>1</sup> Kempe has suggested that roughly 25 percent of all fractures seen in the first two years of life are due to the battered child syndrome and that "10 to 15 percent of all trauma seen in children under three years of life were found to be due to this syndrome quite regardless of the history given or the social class of the parents."<sup>2</sup>

In contrast with these alarming estimations, Gil obtained reports from every state government throughout the United States on every legally reported incident during 1967 and 1968--a total of 20,500 cases, 12,600 of which involved physical abuse.<sup>3</sup> Gil suggested that the root cause of child abuse is culturally approved use of physical force in child

---

<sup>1</sup>Scrapio R. Zalba, "The Abused Child--1. A Survey of the Problem," Social Work, XI (October, 1966), 8; David G. Gil, "Incidence of Child Abuse and Demographic Characteristics of Persons Involved," The Battered Child, eds. Helfer and Kempe, pp. 24-25.

<sup>2</sup>C. Henry Kempe, "Pediatric Implications of the Battered Baby Syndrome," Archives of Disorders in Childhood, XLVI (January, 1971), 28.

<sup>3</sup>Gil, Violence Against Children, pp. 92-95.



rearing, which is endemic in American society, and especially among the poor and uneducated segments and among large, unbroken families.<sup>1</sup>

In a 1969 article, Gil commented that:

Although no claim can be made that the nationwide survey uncovered the true incidence rate of physical abuse of children, it seems clear nevertheless, that the magnitude of the phenomenon has been exaggerated. Six thousand reported cases of physical abuse per year in a nation of 200 million, in spite of under reporting, do not constitute a major social problem, at least in relative terms, tragic as every single incident may be....If then the 6000 reported cases represents as a group the more severe segment of the physical abuse spectrum, it follows that in qualitative terms, physical abuse is by and large not very serious as reflected by the data cohort. The classic "battered child" syndrome is a relatively infrequent occurrence. Even if allowance is made for the gross under reporting of fatalities, physical abuse cannot be considered a major killer and maimer of children.<sup>2</sup>

However conservative estimates have indicated that child abuse in the United States is so significant that it represents one of the most serious problems confronting the physician who cares for children.<sup>3</sup> In 1965, 15,000 children in the United States were severely injured by non-accidental means. It is estimated that 5 percent of these children

---

<sup>1</sup>Gil, Violence Against Children, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup>David G. Gil, "Physical Abuse of Children: Findings and Implications of a Nationwide Survey," Pediatrics, XLIV (Suppl., 1969), 862.

<sup>3</sup>Helfer and Kempe, The Battered Child, pp. 43-44.

were killed and 25 to 30 percent permanently injured.<sup>1</sup>

Helfer's comments place the problem in perspective:

These instances are more significant statistically than the problems and complications associated with common childhood diseases such as measles, mumps, and chicken pox....To the best of our knowledge at least 250 children are injured in a non-accidental manner for every million population in urban areas. Unless these families are recognized early and some form of family-centered therapy instituted, approximately two to three percent of these children will be killed each year and thirty percent of the younger ones will receive permanent physical injury or brain damage.<sup>2</sup>

Kempe estimated that child abuse may occur as often as six times for every 1000 births. Zalba estimated conservatively that 200,000 to 250,000 children in need of protective service in the United States 30,000 may have been badly hurt.

Gil and Noble asserted that reported cases in this country are only a fraction of the actual number which they estimate at between 2.5-4.1 million per year.<sup>3</sup>

As the reader can see from the above statistics, child abuse in the United States appears to be a major social problem.

Baldwin and Oliver, in their study of children who had been severely physically abused, commented on the duration of abusive behavior received by these children.

The most common history was of severe abuse extending over one to ten months (seventeen children), while the remaining eleven children

---

<sup>1</sup>Smith, pp. 54-55.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, pp. 54-55.

<sup>3</sup>Lystad, p. 332.

were subjected to repeated episodes covering from one to over eight years.<sup>1</sup>

They found of the twenty-eight children studied, there were 225 separate incidents of abuse ranging from one to twenty-three incidents per child with an average of 5.9 per child.<sup>2</sup>

Some authors have commented upon the incidence of child abuse in other countries. Kempe, in the 1970 Windermere Lecture in London, remarked that "for 500,000 new born babies born each year in Great Britain, there may be 3,000 cases each year of which half will be significantly injured and the other half seriously deprived."<sup>3</sup> Smith added:

This would mean about 3000 children age 0-3 years should be referred every year in England and Wales as a whole,...the death rate might be 0.1/1000 (300 per year in England and Wales) and this would be approximately about 2-2.5 per cent [sic] of all deaths in children age zero to three.<sup>4</sup>

Smith quoted Lukianowicz as having calculated that there are 8000 children battered each year in West Germany and that a similar number occurs in Great Britain.<sup>5</sup> Again

---

<sup>1</sup>K. Baldwin and S. Oliver, "Epidemiology and Family Characteristics of Severely Abused Children," British Journal of Preventive and Social Medicine, XXIX (December, 1975), 210.

<sup>2</sup>Baldwin and Oliver, p. 209.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup>Smith, p. 58.

<sup>5</sup>Smith, p. 57.

this seems to support the common assumption that child abuse is not just an American phenomenon.

The next two sections will examine some of the characteristics of children who have been abused and parents who abuse their children.

### Characteristics of Children Who Have Been Abused

Many authors have observed that it was the young child, under the age of two, who was the most susceptible to physical abuse at the hands of his/her parents. Simons and his associates found that 28 percent of the children abused in their study were under the age of one year old, 41 percent were between one and five years old, 23 percent between five and ten, and 8 percent were over ten.<sup>1</sup> Similar results have been reported by Kroger and Helfer and Kempe.<sup>2</sup> Baldwin and Oliver in their study of children who were severely physically abused found that three-fourths of them were under the age of one at the onset of severe abuse.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>B. Simons and others, "Child Abuse: Epidemiological Study of Medically Reported Cases," New York Journal of Medicine, LXVI (November, 1966), 2786.

<sup>2</sup>N. Kroger, A Survey of Physical Abused Children Known to Selected Hospitals and Health Agencies in the Chicago Area, Publication No. 4008 (Chicago: Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago, 1964), p. 1; Helfer and Kempe, The Battered Child, p. 217.

<sup>3</sup>Baldwin and Oliver, p. 203.

These findings (and those of others) may, however, be reconciled by the observation that younger children had more serious injuries and were thus more likely to be hospitalized, thus supporting that any injury (other than a road traffic accident) to a child under two must be considered to be an instance of the battered baby syndrome.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the reasons most commonly offered for the higher incidence of physical abuse of children under the age of two are their relative inability to move away from the person inflicting physical abuse, the most vulnerable period for broken bones due to the greater sensitivity of the infant's bones, and the fact older children pass from the responsibility of pediatric services and are not closely surveyed again until the pre-school years (four-five years old).

The Department of Social Services for the state of Iowa indicated that in 1977 2,328 cases of suspected child abuse were reported to it, while in 1978 7,728 cases were reported, and during the first six months of 1979, 8,338 cases were reported to the Department. The age breakdown was as follows:

---

<sup>1</sup>Editorial, "Violent Parents," Lancet, II (November 6, 1971), 1017-18.

<u>Age</u>	<u>1977</u> <sup>1</sup>	<u>1978</u> <sup>2</sup>	<u>Jan.-June 1979</u> <sup>3</sup>
Below age 3 years	25%	24%	21%
3-5 years	18	21	22
6-11 years	27	31	32
12-18 years	28	23	23
No age reported	2	1	2

Regarding the sex of the children who were abused, Baldwin and Oliver reported that a rate of 1.4:1 (boys:girls) was obtained in their retrospect study and a ratio of 1:1.7 was found in their prospective study.<sup>4</sup> The Department of Social Services in Iowa has found over an eight-year period

---

<sup>1</sup>Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data on Child Abuse Cases Reported to the State Department of Social Services, January-June, 1977" (unpublished report; Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Social Services, July, 1977); Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data on Child Abuse Cases Reported to the State Department of Social Services, July-December, 1977" (unpublished report; Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Social Services, March, 1978).

<sup>2</sup>Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data on Child Abuse Cases Reported to the State Department of Social Services, January-June, 1978" (unpublished report; Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Social Services, July, 1978); Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data on Child Abuse Cases Reported to the State Department of Social Services, July-December, 1978" (unpublished report; Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Social Services, February, 1979).

<sup>3</sup>Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data on Child Abuse Cases Reported to the State Department of Social Services, January-June, 1979" (unpublished report; Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Social Services, February, 1980).

<sup>4</sup>Baldwin and Oliver, p. 208.

(1972-1979) that approximately an equal number of males and females were subjected to abuse. This ratio remained consistent even though the number of cases reported each year increased tenfold over this period.<sup>1</sup> As can be seen by looking at these two studies, child abuse seems to be evenly divided between the sexes, however, a drastic increase in the percent in the direction of girls is reported as the youngsters get older and sexual abuse becomes more of a factor.

Often the question is asked as to why this particular child was singled out for abuse and whether he/she is physically not as fit as his/her siblings. Baldwin and Oliver, in their study of severely physically abused children, found that 21 percent of their sample were born prematurely in comparison to 6.7 percent in the general population, 10 percent had congenital defects as compared with 3 percent in the general population, and 23 percent were born out of wedlock as compared with 7.6 percent in the local population.<sup>2</sup>

Several authors (Simons et. al., 1966; Gregg and Elmer, 1969; Skinner and Castle, 1969) have asserted that low birth weight babies are particularly at

---

<sup>1</sup>Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data...", reports for the years 1977 and 1978 and the first six months of 1979.

<sup>2</sup>Baldwin and Oliver, p. 209.

risk of battering and others (Klause and Kennell, 1970; Klein and Stern, 1971) have interpreted this as failure of bonding due to separating mother from her child during the neonatal period.<sup>1</sup>

Some authors have pointed out that contrary to popular belief, for example, Smith has stated that "battered children were not hyperactive but in some respects lethargic."<sup>2</sup> Baldwin and Oliver reported that prominent clinical features of children who were abused were: 42 percent of them had a fear of their parents or adults in general; 42 percent were withdrawn, listless; 29 percent were hyperactive or had repetitious motor activity; 45 percent had persistent crying or irritability; and 34 percent marked pallor.<sup>3</sup> Gil, on the other hand, has suggested that many children who are abused are more aggressive and disruptive than children who are not abused.<sup>4</sup> However, most researchers have not dealt with the emotional and behavioral consequences of child abuse. Rather they have commented upon the gathering of data on the age and severity of abuse.

Some authors have questioned whether one's birth order makes him/her more susceptible to child abuse than a

---

<sup>1</sup>Smith, p. 195; the primary source for the authors quoted by Smith are found in the bibliography section of the present paper.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, p. 195.

<sup>3</sup>Baldwin and Oliver, p. 209.

<sup>4</sup>Gil, Violence Against Children, pp. 107-108.



brother or sister born before or after him/her. Smith commented in his study that "among the sample 33.3 percent of the battered babies were second and subsequent born children."<sup>1</sup> Lukianowicz has suggested that it is usually the only or youngest child in a family who is battered.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, when birth order is compared in proportion to family size, the suggestion that a child's particular ordinal position carries more risk of being battered does not hold. Furthermore the finding that 19 percent of the child's siblings had also been abused are at variance with Zalba's assertion and Merrill's results that only one particular child in a family is abused.<sup>3</sup> Baldwin and Oliver's study of severely abused children in thirty-four families with a combined total of 116 children found that over half of them had four or more children and three-fourths of them were from families of three or more. These researchers also found that of the seventy-eight siblings of the children severely abused, 84 percent (sixty-five) were at risk and 63 percent of those at risk had been definitely moderately

---

<sup>1</sup>Smith, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup>Norman Lukianowicz, "Battered Children," Pediatric Clinic, IV (July, 1971), 264.

<sup>3</sup>Serapio R. Zalba, "The Abused Child--2. A Typology for Classification and Treatment," Social Work, XII (February, 1967), 72; E. J. Merrill, "Physical Abuse of Children: An Agency Study," Protecting the Battered Child, ed. Vincent De Francis (Denver: American Humane Association, 1962), pp. 263-67.

or severely abused and another 6 percent were suspected of having been abused.<sup>1</sup>

Baldwin and Oliver also reported that of their sample, 79 percent of the first born had been attacked, 93 percent of the second born, 70 percent of the third born, and 88 percent of fourth born.<sup>2</sup> No data were supplied for the amount of child abuse for the fifth born and subsequent births. They further commented that of those at risk, 82 percent of the eldest had been attacked; if the eldest had been attacked, the likelihood of the second being attacked was 78 percent; if the oldest two children had been attacked, then 64 percent of the third born children were also attacked; and if all three oldest children had been attacked, then there was a 50 percent chance of attack for the fourth born child.<sup>3</sup>

Smith found that "33.3 percent [of those abused in his study] had siblings who had also been maltreated, this should caution one against the over-optimistic belief that only one child in a family is affected [abused]."<sup>4</sup>

Schmitt, Grozz and Carroll have observed that:

---

<sup>1</sup>Baldwin and Oliver, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup>Baldwin and Oliver, p. 212.

<sup>3</sup>Baldwin and Oliver, p. 212.

<sup>4</sup>Smith, p. 192.

there is approximately a twenty percent risk that a sibling of a physically abused child has also been abused at the same point; and there is almost a 100 percent chance that the siblings of an abused child will be emotionally and developmentally impaired.<sup>1</sup>

In summary, it would appear that a large number of children who are abused are very young (under the age of two), from families of three or more children, and a large portion of their brothers and sisters have also been abused at some time.

#### Characteristics of Parents Who Abuse Their Children

A review of professional opinion in the literature reveals that (a) the abusing parent was himself raised with some degree of deprivation; (b) the abusing parent brings to his role as parent mistaken notions of child rearing, (c) there is present in the parent a general defect in character structure allowing aggressive impulses to be expressed too freely; and (d) while socioeconomic factors might sometimes place added stress on basic personality weakness, those stresses are not themselves sufficient or necessarily cause abuse.<sup>2</sup>

Each of these points will be explored in greater detail in this section.

Helfer and Kempe, Gil, and others have reported that

---

<sup>1</sup>Barton D. Schmitt, Candance A. Grozz, and Claudia A. Carroll, "The Child Protection Team: A Problem Oriented Approach," Child Abuse and Neglect: The Family and the Community, eds. Helfer and Kempe, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup>John J. Spinetta and David Rigler, "The Child-Abusing Parent: A Psychological Review," Psychological Bulletin, LXXVII (April, 1972), 296.

a majority of parents who abuse their children were themselves abused as children.<sup>1</sup>

Another common observation often found in the literature is that abusing parents are rather young. Lukianowicz found that the average age for the mothers in his study was twenty-two years old (range eighteen to thirty-four) and for fathers it was twenty-four years old (range nineteen to thirty-five). He concluded that it was mostly parents who were young and often emotionally immature who battered their children.<sup>2</sup>

Smith, in his study of battered children in England, found that the average age of his index mothers was 19.7 when they gave birth to their first child. This was striking when compared to the national average of 23.3.<sup>3</sup> He also pointed out that over 50 percent of his index mothers were married before the age of twenty and that 75 percent had conceived premaritally.<sup>4</sup> Smith also found that more than one third of his sample of battered children were born out

---

<sup>1</sup>Helfer and Kempe, Child Abuse and Neglect, p. 118; Gil, Violence Against Children, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Lukianowicz, p. 263.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, p. 197.

<sup>4</sup>Smith, p. 202.

of wedlock.<sup>1</sup> This agrees with the findings of others.<sup>2</sup>

Roundtree has suggested that among the population at large a combination of marriage at an early age and birth of a child shortly afterwards was associated with marital breakdown.<sup>3</sup> Kempe and his associates have pointed out that there is a high incidence of divorce, separation, and unstable marriage among their sample.<sup>4</sup> Further evidence for the foundation of possible marital discord was offered by Smith. He found that 29 percent of his index mothers were unmarried compared to 6 percent of his control group and in 35 percent of the index cases, the biological father was absent from the home as compared to 4 percent in the control group.<sup>5</sup> It was also found that 15 percent of the index cases studied stated that they had known each other for less than six months before they got married while none of the controls indicated this.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Smith, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup>De Francis, p. 268; Simons and others, p. 2787.

<sup>3</sup>G. Roundtree, "Some Aspects of Marriage Breakdown in Britain During the Last Thirty Years," Population Study, XVIII (1964), 155-59.

<sup>4</sup>C. Henry Kempe and others, "The Battered Child Syndrome," Journal of American Medical Association, CLXXXI (June, 1962), 18.

<sup>5</sup>Smith, p. 160.

<sup>6</sup>Smith, pp. 160-61.

When this is combined with the early age at marriage mentioned previously, it can be seen that the foundation for marital problems was laid. In fact, 30 percent of the index mothers and 13 percent of the index fathers in Smith's study described their marriage or liaison (cohabitation) as unsatisfactory. This was statistically significant as none of the control group described their marriage in this manner.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to marital difficulties, some authors have commented upon the substantial amount of social isolation parents who abuse their children experience. Smith commented that 49 percent of his index mothers compared with 26 percent of the control mothers reported that they had no opportunity to have a break from their children.<sup>2</sup> "More than 50 percent of the index mothers lacked social contact with neighbor and friends."<sup>3</sup> Nineteen percent of the index and 2 percent of the control group said they had impaired relationships with their brothers and sisters. This difference remained significant even after adjustments for social class differences had been made.<sup>4</sup> It was found that 4 percent of the index fathers compared with 10 percent of the

---

<sup>1</sup>Smith, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, p. 166.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, p. 209.

<sup>4</sup>Smith, p. 158.

control fathers reported having no social activities. When this is compared with the large difference between the isolation the index mothers experienced in comparison with that of the index fathers, these figures become increasingly important in explaining the tremendous amount of social isolation felt by mothers who abuse their children.<sup>1</sup>

Considering that nearly 50 percent of the index mothers lacked baby-sitting arrangements and that this result was not affected by controlling for social class, it could be argued that it was the prime reason for this failure to occupy themselves socially in the community. It is more probable, however, that this failure to participate in recreational activities is a reflection of the incompatibility between parents themselves.<sup>2</sup>

However adequate research of this last point has not been fully considered at the current time.

Many authors have addressed the belief that there is something in the parents' psychological makeup or background which makes them take their frustrations out on their child(ren). Paulson summarized this as follows:

In the parent's eye, it is safer to attack the child than to confront those adults who laid the foundations for present maladaptive behavior [his/her parents]...Said one angry father who attempted to justify the overly severe disciplining of his child, "My father used a horsewhip on me to make me a man. If it's good enough for my old man, it's good enough for me and my kids."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Smith, p. 166.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, p. 210.

<sup>3</sup>Morris J. Paulson, "Child Trauma Intervention: A Community Response to Family Violence," Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, IV (Fall, 1975), 28.

Steele and Pollock, Kempe, and Gil have all commented upon the fact that a large majority of parents who abuse their children had been abused themselves in childhood.<sup>1</sup>

While most authors generally agree that there is a defect in the parents' personality that allows aggressive impulses to be expressed too freely (Kempe et. al., 1962; Wasserman, 1967; Steele and Pollock, 1968) disagreement comes in describing the source of the aggressive impulse (Spinetta and Riglet, 1972).

Some authors claim that abuse is a final outburst at the end of a long period of tension (TenHave, 1965; Normura, 1966), or that it stems from an inability to face life's daily stresses (Heins, 1969). Others claim that abuse stems from deep feelings of inadequacy or from inability to fulfill the parental role (Cohen, Raphling and Green, 1968; Komisaruk, 1966; Silver, 1968; Johnson and Morse, 1968; Steele and Pollock, 1968; Fontana, 1971). Others also describe the parents as immature....<sup>2</sup>

Van Stolk has also challenged the belief that child battering in times of stress is normal or human nature.

There is no evidence to indicate that all people are potential child batterers. There is no evidence to support the supposition that given enough pressure, tension and trauma a man or woman will turn upon his or her young child and strike out.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Helfer and Kempe, The Battered Child, p. 111; Kempe, "Pediatric Implication," p. 28; Gil, Violence Against Children, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, p. 62. The primary sources for the authors quoted by Smith are found in the bibliography section of the current paper.

<sup>3</sup>Mary Van Stolk, The Battered Child in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), pp. 35-36.



She has argued convincingly that child abuse is abnormal behavior and should be no longer dismissed as a regrettable but inevitable aspect of human nature. "Instead, the inside mechanisms, as well as the cultural mechanics, which create and maintain a structure of child battering, must be investigated."<sup>1</sup>

It is not too surprising that when the literature on the psychiatric features of child abusing parents is reviewed a different picture emerges. Smith found that many of his index mothers were neurotic as measured on three different scales. He found that 48 percent were nonpsychotically disturbed on the Goldberg General Health Questionnaire and 48 percent were diagnosed as neurotic at interview--the usual symptomatology being depression, anxiety or a mixture of both.<sup>2</sup>

This is in sharp contrast with the findings of Kempe and Helfer who stated that only a small proportion (less than 10 percent) of parents who abuse their children are seriously mentally ill.<sup>3</sup> Paulson cautioned that while "a psychiatric diagnosis is likewise useful as a labeling procedure, yet it doesn't help elucidate the psychogenesis of the great majority (90%) of the non-psychotic, non-retarded,

---

<sup>1</sup>Van Stolk, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup>Kempe and Helfer, Helping the Battered Child, p. xii.

non-brain damaged parents who are abusive."<sup>1</sup>

While some parents seem to be mentally ill, the great majority seem to be more disturbed by some particular behavior of their child(ren).

When the failure of the child to behave as an adult when "ordered" accentuates the parent's feeling of insecurity, the explosive outburst of physical abuse is thus a symbol of failure in parenting at that moment is only a recapitulation of life history of isolation, inferiority, inadequacy, and rejection. For many abusive fathers, excess competitive drives and the need for control of the family are expressions of Adlerian over-compensatory superiority drives.<sup>2</sup>

Smith, as well as others, has commented on the role reversal pattern often found in families of abused children. Once again, role reversal was defined as:

A reversal of the dependency role in which parents turn to their infants and small children for nurturing and protection. Two basic elements are postulated to be involved--a high expectation and demand by the parents for the infant's performance and a corresponding parental disregard of the infant's own needs, limited abilities and helplessness.<sup>3</sup>

Often the parents expected an infant to meet their needs instead of them meeting the needs of the baby or child. By some magical manner the child was expected to wipe away all of the bad things that had occurred to the parents during the day (or the child was blamed for the fact that the

---

<sup>1</sup>Paulson, "Child Trauma Intervention," p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Paulson, "Child Trauma Intervention," p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, p. 263.

washing machine had broken down).

A summary of the literature regarding the characteristics of parents who abuse their children would seem to indicate that a majority of these parents were abused during their childhood, were married at a young age and the birth of their first child occurred within the first year of marriage. Many of the mothers who abuse their children feel a tremendous amount of social isolation as it relates to the world outside of her home and often these mothers look to their children to meet her needs (the mother's needs) in a role reversal manner. Previous research studies seem to disagree as to the severity and extent that parents who abuse their children are mentally ill. However, most researchers seem to support the belief that these individuals have a very difficult time expressing their frustrations other than in a physical manner against their children.

#### Psychological Evaluation of Parents Who Abuse Their Children

In an effort to gain some objective psychological evidence of the mental health of parents who abuse their children beyond that which can be obtained by observation, some researchers have administered various structured and unstructured projective personality tests. The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) is one of the most commonly used tests of personality and has been administered in an effort to gain a better understanding of the mental

health of parents who abuse their children.

Wright administered a battery of personality tests, which consisted of the Rorschach Inkblots, the MMPI, and the Rosenzweig Picture Frustration Study, to thirteen parents convicted in court (but not incarcerated) for abusing their children and thirteen nonbattering, control parents of children hospitalized for infections, bone fractures for which these parents were not felt to have been negligent. Each group contained five males and eight females and both groups were matched for age, total family income and years of schooling.<sup>1</sup> Wright found that:

Battering parents appear significantly less like batterers on tests items that are logically derived (low bizarre content on the Rorschach, high intro-punitiveness and group conformity on the Rosenzweig). They appear more psychopathic on the L, K, and Pd scales of the MMPI, whose items were derived empirically. In other words, the battering parents were able to appear significantly healthier on those instruments based on content or face validity, in which the social desirability of each item is more obvious. However, for items based on concurrent or statistical validity, where the social desirable response is more ambiguous, they appeared significantly disturbed. This, combined with the fact that the nature of the revealed disturbance on the MMPI is a near-classic profile for psychopathy, suggests that battering parents do possess such tendencies, but will portray themselves inversely whenever possible. This latter tendency is apparently the manifestation of defense mechanisms such as compensation and/or reaction formation [*italics in the original*].<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Logan Wright, "The 'Sick but Slick' Syndrome as a Personality Component of Parents of Battered Children," Journal of Clinical Psychology, XXXII (January, 1976), 42.

<sup>2</sup>Wright, p. 42.

This led Wright to feel that many parents who abuse their children are "sick but slick," appearing to be on the outside well adjusted, but very unstable emotionally on the inside.<sup>1</sup>

Kaleita and Wise in comparing twenty-five parents who abuse their children with forty violent and forty non-violent criminal offenders on the MMPI found that none of the groups proved to be significantly different from one another when the twelve scales of the MMPI were separately compared.<sup>2</sup> They also found that child abusers indicated profiles with highest scores on Psychopathic Deviate (Pd) and Schizophrenia (Sc) scales.<sup>3</sup> Kaleita and Wise also felt that their results supported the "sick but slick" personality cluster that was suggested by Wright discussed previously.

Paulson and his associates have conducted two studies that analyzed the responses parents who abuse their children and a control group gave on the MMPI. In the first study done in 1974, they selected sixty parents from families in which there was recognized neglect and/or physical child abuse that had been referred to the Child Trauma

---

<sup>1</sup>Wright, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Kaleita and James H. Wise, "An MMPI Comparison of Child Abusers with Two Groups of Criminal Offenders," Pediatric Psychology, I (Spring, 1976), 76.

<sup>3</sup>Kaleita and Wise, p. 76.

Intervention Program at UCLA for evaluation and treatment. These thirty-three mothers and twenty-seven fathers were compared with sixty-three mothers and thirty-seven fathers selected randomly from the files of the UCLA Child Psychiatry Outpatient Clinic.<sup>1</sup> The results of this study indicated that female passive abusers (those who either were aware of the risk of potential abuse and made no intervention or in an indirect manner participated passively in the maltreatment) were:

...highest on those scales that measure interpersonal isolation, paranoid-like thinking, anti-establishment or counter-culture conflicts, and depression. The indices of anxiety, obsessional thinking, ambivalence, self-doubt, introversion, and impulse potential for discharge conflicts were all pronounced in these mothers.<sup>2</sup>

Among the abusing mothers (those definitely responsible for the injury or neglect of the child(ren), there occurred:

...a remarkable absence of measured neurotic anxiety with minimal evidence of somatizing, self-doubt, depression, or expressed insecurity. However, they showed projection as a defense, counter-culture conflict equal to that of the female passive abusers, and an impulse potential equal to that of PA [passive abusive] mothers.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Morris J. Paulson and others, "The MMPI: A Descriptive Measure of Psychopathology in Abusive Parents," Journal of Clinical Psychology, XXX (June, 1974), 387.

<sup>2</sup>Paulson and others, "The MMPI," p. 388.

<sup>3</sup>Paulson and others, "The MMPI," pp. 388-89.

These results would seem to agree with Wright's terminology of "sick but slick," which he applied to parents who abuse their children.<sup>1</sup> Paulson and his associates summarized their first study by stating:

The results have shown characteristic profiles that differentiate between abusive and nonabusive parents and even differentiate within samples of abusing mothers and fathers. Not one homogeneous profile pattern on the MMPI identifies the abusing parent. There is clear psychometric evidence that the sex of the abusive parent must be considered when one attempts to understand, identify, and treat such Ss.<sup>2</sup>

In their second study, Paulson and his associates selected the thirty-three parents whom they had determined were actual abusing parents in the previous study described above. They compared this group's response on the MMPI with those of one hundred control parents, who had been selected at random from the files of the UCLA Child Psychiatric Clinic and had served as the control group in the 1974 study.<sup>3</sup> Paulson and his associates developed three scales to analyze the responses given by abusive parents and the control group. The scales were a male abuser, female abuser, and a combination male and female abuser scale.<sup>4</sup> Applying

---

<sup>1</sup>Wright, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup>Paulson and others, "The MMPI," p. 369.

<sup>3</sup>Morris J. Paulson and others, "An MMPI Scale for Identifying 'At Risk' Abusive Parents," Journal of Clinical Psychology, IV (Spring, 1975), 22-23.

<sup>4</sup>Paulson and others, "An MMPI Scale," p. 23.

the traditional T-score of seventy or more on the MMPI to identify the range of psychopathology, the researchers hypothesized that a subject was potentially at risk as an abusing parent if he/she obtained a score of seventy or more on any of the three scales Paulson and his associates developed. The combined scale produced 42 percent false negatives. On the other hand, when the separate female abuser and the male abuser scales were applied depending upon the sex of the respondent, only 9 percent false negatives occurred.<sup>1</sup> Paulson and his associates concluded their findings by stating, "Therefore, sex-specific scales are strongly recommended when using this psychometric approach to aid in identifying at-risk abusive Ss."<sup>2</sup>

In summary, it would appear that parents who abuse their children often look mentally healthy at first glance on the MMPI or similar personality testing, but are internally less well adjusted when a closer observation is conducted. It would also appear that males and females who abuse their children have markedly different profiles on the MMPI and different scales should be used in relationship to the sex of the abuser when evaluating parents who abuse their children.

---

<sup>1</sup>Paulson and others, "An MMPI Scale," p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Paulson and others, "An MMPI Scale," p. 24.



Child Abuse and Educational Personnel

McCaffrey and Tewey, as well as many others, have commented that more than half of the children who are maltreated in the United States are attending school.<sup>1</sup> Therefore the classroom teacher and other professionals in the school play a crucial role in these students' lives.

"As [a] social resource, education is second only to the family in its potential for sustained and thorough involvement in all children's lives."<sup>2</sup>

Gil in discussing the role of teachers and child abuse has suggested:

The classroom teacher should become the most important link in the prevention and protective chain, since his daily contacts put him in a strategic position to observe early indications of abuse. His observations can lead to protective intervention before a situation becomes irreversible.<sup>3</sup>

Many state legislators have included teachers and other certified school personnel among those who are required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. The state of Iowa enacted the school's certified

---

<sup>1</sup>Mary McCaffrey and Stephanna Tewey, "Preparing Educators to Participate in the Community Response to Child Abuse and Neglect," Exceptional Children, XLV (October, 1978) 114.

<sup>2</sup>Education Commission of the States, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Gil, "What Schools Can Do About Child Abuse," p. 3.

staff's involvement as mandated reporters in the Child Abuse Reporting Law Revision of 1974.<sup>1</sup>

Gil found in his nationwide survey of 5,993 cases of child abuse reported in 1967 that 16 percent of the cases were initiated by the schools.<sup>2</sup> Figures gathered by the Iowa Department of Social Services for the years 1977 and 1978 and the first six months of 1979 indicated that approximately 19 percent, 14 percent, and 14 percent respectively of the cases reported to the Department as suspected cases of child abuse were made by school employees (teachers, principals, school nurses, etc.).<sup>3</sup> This compares with 15 percent, 9 percent, and 6 percent respectively for the same time period for reports received from hospitals, nurses (excluding school nurses), and physicians.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Iowa, Code of Iowa, I, Chapter 235(A), 1975.

<sup>2</sup>Gil, "What Schools Can Do About Child Abuse," p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data...", 1977, p. 7; Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data...", 1978, p. 3; Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data...", 1979, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data...", 1977, p. 7; Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data...", 1978, p. 3; Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data...", 1979, p. 3.

Data obtained from the state of Arizona indicated that in 1977 less than 4 percent of the cases reported to the Child Protection Service as child abuse were reported by doctors and hospitals.<sup>1</sup>

While teachers and other certified school employees reported the largest number of cases to the Department of Social Services in Iowa in 1977 and 1978 and the first six months of 1979 from among those required to do so (mandated reporters), approximately 25 percent of the cases reported in these years were received from friends and neighbors of these children.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the reasons why teachers and other school staff members' percentage of cases reported has not dramatically increased even though many states have enacted their required involvement in the past few years in reporting cases of suspected child abuse and/or neglect probably are related to their reluctance to become involved unless they have "positive" proof that this child has been mistreated. Ten Bensel and Berdie have listed seven reasons why school employees are often reluctant to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect. First, the worker

---

<sup>1</sup>Sarah Auffret, "Child Abuse in Mesa," Mesa [Arizona] Magazine, II (October, 1978), 15.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data...", 1977, p. 7; Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data...", 1978, p. 3; Department of Social Services, "Statistical Data...", 1979, p. 3.

is quite often unsure whether the student was really mistreated or whether it was an accident that lead to the visual injury. Also, there is the hope that this situation will go away and not reoccur. Thus the teacher and other school personnel will not have to deal with this problem again.<sup>1</sup>

Though not mentioned by Ten Bensel and Berdie, some teachers and other school workers have expressed the opinion that it was none of their business what happens to the child outside of school hours or how the parents discipline their children. These individuals seem to feel that their main concern should be to educate the student in the three R's and not worry about the child's behavior outside of school. Teachers have even been overhead in the last few years to have advocated the use of "appropriate" disciplinary measures at home by the parents for misdeeds the child has performed in school. They feel that it would be similar to the old saying, "If you got spanked in school, you can expect to get spanked twice as much when you get home tonight." The appropriateness of the discipline dealt out by the parents is left to their discretion.

The second reason mentioned by Ten Bensel and Berdie why teachers often fail to report suspected cases of child

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert W. Ten Bensel and Jane Berdie, "The Neglect and Abuse of Children and Youth: The Scope of the Problem and the School's Role," The Journal of School Health, XLVI (October, 1976), 459.

abuse is the fear of having to face an angry and hostile parent.<sup>1</sup> Some may reason consciously or unconsciously that since this person has injured his/her child, he/she would not give a second thought to "beating up" a complete stranger (the teacher).

Not being sure of what support an administrator or school system will offer if the teacher makes a report of suspected child abuse to the department of social services or child protection department is another reason why teachers are often reluctant to make such a report.<sup>2</sup> "If principals support teachers in reporting abuse, they [the teachers] will do so."<sup>3</sup> Davoren has pointed out that school boards and superintendents could play a significant role by seeing to it that principals are educated to recognize symptoms of abuse and are informed of reporting procedures.<sup>4</sup> Bond has suggested that:

The chief block to reporting is an unwillingness to take responsibility--not so much by the person who sees the child in the first instance

---

<sup>1</sup>Ten Bensel and Berdie, p. 459.

<sup>2</sup>Ten Bensel and Berdie, p. 459.

<sup>3</sup>Elizabeth Davoren, The Battered Child in California, cited by David L. Martin, "The Growing Horror of Child Abuse and the Undeniable Role of the Schools in Putting an End to It," American School Board Journal, CLX (November, 1973), 55.

<sup>4</sup>Martin, p. 55.

[the teacher], but often on the part of school administrators who have to answer to irate parents.<sup>1</sup>

Not knowing or understanding what the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse cases are and what will happen once they report a case is another reason given for reluctance to make a report.<sup>2</sup> Such details as: must the reporter give his/her name when making a report, what detailed information is required in order to make the report, how much proof is needed, and will the educator have to go to court and lose a day of work if he/she makes a report, are raised.

Part of the reluctance of school staff members to report a case of suspected child abuse and/or neglect is partially related to the fact that the reporter very often does not find out from the county social service, welfare department, or police department whether it has investigated the report or taken any action to assist the child and his/her family. Most school personnel seldom have any contact with these agencies unless their professional role is one of school nurse, school social worker, administrator, etc. The classroom teacher very seldom has any occasion to interact in a formal manner with welfare and social service agencies. In many communities these agencies and the school

---

<sup>1</sup>Martin, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>Ten Bensel and Berdie, p. 459.

are only vaguely aware of each other's presence.

In addition, most teachers have not received any training while in college about child abuse and how they can assist children who are mistreated. It has only been recently that teacher training programs have started to include a unit on child abuse and its relationship to school age children.

Helfer, in discussing why physicians have been reluctant to report cases of child abuse, has listed eight reasons:

1. Medical school training was insufficient in discussing the doctor's role in child abuse and neglect;
2. Physicians are not trained in interpersonal skills;
3. Doctors have great difficulty working as peers with members of other disciplines;
4. The drain on time, finances and emotions for the physician in private practice is truly expensive if doctors spend needed time to families in crisis;
5. Physicians have a fear about testifying in court;
6. There is minimal personal reward and these rewards are hard to identify;
7. When one does get involved he/she is often confronted with a community service system that is less than helpful; and
8. Physicians have rarely been trained to see themselves or to act as agents for change.<sup>1</sup>

These reasons given by Helfer seem to be about identical to those given by Ten Bensel and Berdie as to why teachers are reluctant to report suspected cases of child abuse. It should be remembered that:

---

<sup>1</sup>Ray E. Helfer, "Why Most Physicians Don't Get Involved in Child Abuse and What to Do About It," Children Today, IV (May/June, 1975), 29-31.

School personnel cannot undress and examine the child in the same fashion as the physician, thus the suspicion of neglect and abuse must be based upon the observation by the teacher and other personnel regarding the child's behavior and external appearance. On occasion the child may volunteer information regarding abuse or neglect and if the observation of the child tends to substantiate the information given, this should meet the criteria of "suspected" abuse.<sup>1</sup>

Though it may sound cruel, thousands of teachers across the country--people who have dedicated themselves to providing for the welfare of children--are contributing to the injury and death statistics by failing to report cases and refusing to get involved in the problem.<sup>2</sup>

Ten Bensel and Berdie have suggested that "the best method to increase the capacity of school personnel to understand and cope with abuse and neglect is to make training available at least once a year in the first month of school to all personnel."<sup>3</sup> However, McCaffrey and Tewey have commented that:

to date, the idea of training educators to assist in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect has largely been addressed by numerous interested professionals, most of whom represent areas of expertise other than education.<sup>4</sup>

School systems such as Mesa, Arizona, have instituted a training program. The Mesa Public School System and the

---

<sup>1</sup>Ten Bensel and Berdie, p. 457.

<sup>2</sup>Bert Shanas, "Child Abuse: A Killer Teachers Can Help Control," Phi Delta Kappan, LVI (March, 1975), 479.

<sup>3</sup>Ten Bensel and Berdie, p. 458.

<sup>4</sup>McCaffrey and Tewey, p. 114.



Mesa Education Association (teachers' union) using materials developed by the Arizona Child Protective Services and the Arizona Community Development for Abuse and Neglect Project have provided inservice training to every teacher in the Mesa system. Initially a committee of sixteen teachers and nurses received intensive training and then began visiting each of the forty schools in Mesa giving a slide presentation and talking and explaining the district's new procedure for reporting abuse and neglect.<sup>1</sup> "Each school site now has a child abuse 'team' made up of the school nurse, principal, and guidance counselor or psychologist."<sup>2</sup>

Procedures in the Mesa schools now are that when a school child abuse team receives a report of possible abuse or neglect, they talk with the child's teacher further to pinpoint whether there's an actual problem. If there is, sometimes it is a matter the school nurse can handle--she might visit the home to teach the mother how to clear up head lice, for instance, or help her understand more about nutrition.

Sometimes the report seems to involve more intensive family problems, so the child is referred to the school psychologist. He, too, might visit the home. And in more severe cases, when it appears actual abuse or chronic neglect is taking place, Child Protective Services are notified. Often a CPS worker is present to help the team decide where to refer the child.<sup>3</sup>

The system used in Mesa seems to have offered

---

<sup>1</sup>Auffret, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Auffret, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Auffret, p. 20.

inservice training to all educators, as well as providing investigation and assistance that are normally handled by a child protection agency or department in other areas of the country.

Other school districts around the country have taken a different direction in their involvement in child abuse and neglect. Most have taken the direction of providing inservice training to their teachers and administrators regarding some of the symptoms that are commonly associated with child abuse and/or neglect and how they should go about reporting a suspected case and to whom their report should be directed.

Ninno has presented a training program that was implemented in the New York City Schools in 1977.<sup>1</sup> The Oakland County, Michigan, Intermediate School District in their administrator's guidebook has listed the following possible indicators of maltreatment of children and has suggested that these be a part of any pretraining and inservice program provided to pre-educators and educators.

1. Facial and body cuts, bruises, and welts;
2. Repeated wearing of torn and dirty clothing;
3. Lack of personal hygiene;
4. Inadequate or seasonally inappropriate clothing;

---

<sup>1</sup>Michael Ninno, "Implementing the New York State Child Protective Services Law: A Guide for Schools" (paper presented at the Annual International Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children, Atlantic, Georgia, April, 1977).

5. Child appears always hungry;
6. Frequent absences and tardiness;
7. Lingering cough, cold, and untreated medical conditions;
8. Failure to seek appropriate care and treatment of handicaps;
9. Statements made by the child;
10. Statements made by friends and classmates of the child;
11. Inability to concentrate on school work;
12. Inappropriate classroom behavior; and
13. Retardation of development for other than organic reasons.<sup>1</sup>

Columnni has summarized these:

Teachers should look for these behaviors and outward appearances: the over-aggressive child, the disruptive or destructive child, the passive child, the frequently absent or late child, the dirty or unkempt child, the tired or undernourished child, the physically scared or beaten child, the inadequately dressed child, and the child who comes to school early and leaves late.<sup>2</sup>

Ten Bensel and Berdie have pointed out that "most of the physical abuse to school age children results in soft tissue swelling, eg [sic], bruises, welts, abrasions,

---

<sup>1</sup>Oakland County Office of Prosecuting Attorney, A Prosecutor's Handbook for School Administrators (Revised; Pontiac, Mich.: Oakland County, 1975), pp. 16-17.

<sup>2</sup>N. D. Columnni, Jr., "The Schools and the Problem of Child Abuse and Neglect," Contemporary Education, XLVIII (Winter, 1977), 99.

lacerations and burns (cigarette or hot water)."<sup>1</sup> Columnni, citing from David Gil's work, stated that 90 percent of all reported physical injuries are not severe enough to leave lasting physical effects. Most of the injuries take the form of bruises, welts, abrasions, and lacerations and in about 15 percent of the cases bone fractures occur.<sup>2</sup> The data mentioned by Columnni included preschool as well as school-age children.

Drews has found that 49 percent of the school districts she investigated in 1970 stated that they had a policy for reporting cases of child abuse and/or neglect, but only 24 percent of the principals, teachers, etc., said they had knowledge of this policy.<sup>3</sup>

The Education Commission for the States found that:

The findings suggest that professional education groups tend to adopt policies regarding child abuse before initiating programs of activities. For example, while 17 percent of the groups had adopted policies, only 5 percent had sponsored professional training or public or professional awareness campaigns.<sup>4</sup>

The school cannot deal with this problem independently of other social institutions in the

---

<sup>1</sup>Ten Bensel and Berdie, p. 455.

<sup>2</sup>Columnni, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup>Kay Drews, "The Child and the School," Helping the Battered Child and His Family, eds. Kempe and Helfer, p. 122.

<sup>4</sup>Education Commission of the States, p. 6.

community. Its primary function is to help detect and then to report to the appropriate child protection agency the incident recorded. Kay Drews, a recognized expert in the field, suggests that any operating procedure should include the following:

1. Special training programs for teachers to enable them to recognize suspected cases of physical abuse.
2. Specific instructions given to the teacher to report all suspected cases to a stated individual in her school.
3. The child should be seen by the school physician who would examine the child, interview the parents and report the case to the proper agency.
4. The school must then communicate its information to the agency and develop a cooperative therapeutic plan.
5. A follow-through system should be established by the school to make certain that the case was handled properly and the therapeutic plan is working.<sup>1</sup>

#### Relationship Between Previous Studies on Child Abuse and the Present Study

Most of the studies found in the literature have dealt with the incidence of child abuse and neglect in the United States and other countries in the world, characteristics of the children who are abused, and characteristics of parents who abuse their children. To date, no study has been reported in the literature which examined what knowledge teachers, administrators, and other school personnel have regarding specific aspects of child abuse and of their

---

<sup>1</sup>Columni, p. 100.

responsibilities for reporting suspected cases as defined by the law of their state.

The only study found in the literature dealing with professionals' knowledge of child abuse was a 1978 study which examined the knowledge that mental health practitioners (psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers) had regarding the Child Abuse Reporting Law in the State of Nebraska.<sup>1</sup>

The Iowa Law Review is currently conducting a study of the knowledge and feelings doctors, nurses, and social workers have regarding the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Statute and factors influencing their attitudes toward reporting suspected cases. The social worker group also included school social workers. However, this study will not be completed until late summer 1980 and will be reported in the Iowa Law Review at a later date.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Swoboda et al.

<sup>2</sup>Personal communication between Dennis Ballard of the Iowa Law Review and the writer, April 1, 1980.

## Chapter 3

### PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine what knowledge teachers and other certified school employees had regarding specific aspects of child abuse and Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law. This information will assist school districts in better determining the extent of knowledge their employees have regarding these subjects and areas in which further inservice training might be indicated.

#### Population and Sample

All certified school employees in four west central Iowa school districts and the certified staff of the area education agency (AEA) who serve these districts were asked to fill out a questionnaire examining their knowledge of specific aspects of child abuse and Iowa's Reporting Law. These individuals were selected to comprise the population of this study because the researcher is currently serving the four districts in the role of a consulting support service staff member and in an effort to help determine what type of inservice workshop training might be needed in relationship to the Iowa Reporting Law and child abuse in general.

From an initial population of certified school employees of 201, 128 individuals (64 percent) responded and returned the questionnaire distributed to all certified school district employees and AEA staff. As can be seen from Table 1, two-thirds of the respondents were female, 69 percent had only a bachelor's degree, and 64 percent had been in the field of education for ten years or less.

Table 1  
Vital Statistics of Participants

Subdivisions	Teacher Group	Administration Group	Support Service Group	Totals
Number in each discipline	98*	10	20	128
In Ed. 10 yrs. or less	62	2	17	81
In Ed. more than 10 yrs.	35	8	3	46
Bachelor's Degree	83	0	4	87
Master's or Higher Degree	14	10	16	40
Male educators	27	10	5	42
Female educators	70	0	15	85
Under 35 yrs. old	61	4	14	79
35 yrs. old or older	36	6	6	48
Married or been married	72	10	16	98
Never been married	25	0	4	29
Educators with children	61	9	10	80
Educators without children	36	1	10	47

\*Note: One respondent in the teacher group did not complete the personal information section on the questionnaire beyond identifying self as a teacher.



### The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed by the researcher using some of the stimulus quiz and self-assessment quiz questions asked in Child Abuse and Neglect: A Self-Instruction Text for Head Start Personnel and following the outline of Chapter 2 of the present study.<sup>1</sup> The first nine questions of the questionnaire asked the respondents about personal data such as gender, age range, level of training, educational experience, etc. The next thirteen questions (number 10-22) concerned specific aspects of child abuse and neglect, and questions 23-36 concerned Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law. The next three questions (numbers 37-39) inquired about the school district's policy regarding the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse and whether the respondent had ever reported a case of child abuse, and the last two questions (numbers 40-41) gave two short vignettes and asked the respondents whether they would report these as suspected cases of child abuse.<sup>2</sup>

During the development of the questionnaire, the assistance of six social workers from two county departments

---

<sup>1</sup>Jean Lakin, Gerald Solomons, and Charles Abel, Child Abuse and Neglect: A Self-Instructional Text for Head Start Personnel (Iowa City, Iowa: Regional Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center, University of Iowa, 1977), passim.

<sup>2</sup>A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

of social services and two county attorneys were used. The social workers and county attorneys were consulted as these two professional groups are directly involved in the investigation and prosecution aspects of the child abuse reporting process in Iowa and thus have firsthand knowledge of child abuse and the Iowa law. These eight individuals were asked to comment as to whether the questions asked dealt with essential aspects of child abuse and of the reporting law that they felt educators should be aware of. The final form of the questionnaire incorporated suggested changes offered by the social workers and attorneys.

The questionnaire was field tested before being distributed to the total sample population by ten school employees for readability and ease of responding. The ten educators who participated in the field testing included two principals, five teachers, and three support staff members chosen at random from the four school districts and AEA used in the full study. Necessary changes were made before being distributed to the total sample population.

#### Data and Instrumentation

The questionnaire was distributed to all certified school employees (teachers, administrators, and school nurses) in the four school districts and the certified staff of the AEA serving these districts following a meeting in which the purpose of the study and the time line for

completing and returning the questionnaire were presented. Reminder notes were placed in the teacher bulletins distributed by the principals as the deadline for returning drew near. About a week before the deadline, the researcher also mentioned to the educators at each school building during the noon lunch hour that the questionnaires were due. The reminder notes from the principals and the personal contact by the researcher were used to ensure the highest response rate possible.

### Analysis

Hypotheses one and two were analyzed using one way ANOVA, and t-tests for significance between means were completed if the ANOVA was statistically significant at the .05 level of confidence. Additional statistical analysis using t-tests for significance between means at the .05 level of confidence were conducted on the data discussed in the study. All of the data were processed with the assistance of the PET 2001 Series microprocessor.

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study to determine the knowledge certified school employees have regarding specific aspects of child abuse and the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law are discussed below. The first section will summarize how the educators responded in relationship to their knowledge of specific aspects of child abuse. The second section will summarize how the educators responded in relationship to their knowledge of Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law. The remainder of the chapter offers a discussion of the differences that exist between those educators who had previously reported a suspected case of child abuse and those educators who had not previously reported a case of suspected child abuse.

#### Knowledge of Specific Aspects of Child Abuse Results

As a group the teachers had a mean of 7.68 correct responses with a range of 3-12 and a standard deviation (s.d.) of 1.83 from a possible 13 on the section of the questionnaire regarding their knowledge about specific aspects of child abuse. Correctitude of a response was determined

by a consensus of opinion of the experts in the field of child abuse as described in the literature. For the purpose of this study, the teacher group included classroom teachers such as fourth grade instructors, history teachers at the high school level, and specially assigned teachers such as physical education and music, as well as special education teachers in resource room and special class programs. The administration group included principals, assistant principals, and superintendents. The administrators achieved a mean of 7.60 correct responses with a range of 5-10 and a s.d. of 1.65. The support service group was composed of such local district employees as school nurses and guidance counselors and AEA staff members such as speech clinicians, school social workers and special education consultants. The support service group had a mean of 7.55 with a range of 6-11 and a s.d. of 1.43. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) failed to locate a significant difference between these three disciplines at the .05 level of confidence ( $F=.05$ ,  $d.f.=2$ , 125). Table 2 summarizes these data. Hayes has pointed out that an obtained F value below 1.00 indicates that there is not enough evidence to warrant the conclusion that mean differences truly exist among the populations compared.<sup>1</sup> Thus  $H_1$ , there is no difference between the knowledge that administrators, teachers, and

---

<sup>1</sup>William L. Hayes, Statistics (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), p. 375.

support service personnel have regarding specific aspects of child abuse, was not rejected.

Table 2

One-Way ANOVA of the Knowledge Educators by Discipline  
have Regarding Specific Aspects of Child Abuse

Components	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F
Between sets	.33	2	.17	<u>.17</u> 3.11
Within sets	<u>388.54</u>	<u>125</u>	3.11	
Total	388.87	127		.05*

\*Statistic not significant at the .05 level.

The percentage of correct responses checked by the educators when considered as a total group is summarized in Table 3. Determination as to whether a particular response choice was the correct one was based upon the consensus of opinion that the experts in the field of child abuse have expressed in the literature. Only those questions from the questionnaire in which less than 40 percent or more than 70 percent of the respondents chose the correct response choice are discussed below.

As a total group, 72 percent of the sample population of educators failed to recognize that more than 500,000 children in the United States (the highest amount listed on the questionnaire) are subjected to child abuse and/or neglected each year (question ten on the questionnaire). Forty

percent indicated that the correct incidence of child abuse was between 250,000 and 500,000 a year.

Table 3

Percentage of Correct Responses by  
Educators as a Total Group

Questions*	Percentage N=128
10. Amount of child abuse in U.S. per year	28
11. Length of existence of reporting laws	62
12. Number of states with reporting laws	25
13. Social-economic-status of family with abuse	87
14. Percentage of fractures within first two years of life	27
15. Length of existence of children's legal rights	94
16. Percentage of abuse within the first two years of life to severely physically abused	34
17. Ratio of males to females who are abused	48
18. Chance of further abuse in previously abused families	88
19. Percentage of school age children abused in Iowa in 1978	70
20. Parents are seriously emotionally impaired	66
21. Parents were abused as children	88
22. Parents are very young	43

\*For exact wording of each question, the copy of the questionnaire in the Appendix should be referred to.

Only 25 percent of the educators surveyed knew that all fifty states currently have laws regarding the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect (question twelve). The remainder of the sample population was evenly divided into thirds in thinking that only one-half, two-thirds, and three-fourths of the states currently have child abuse reporting laws.

Over one-half of the educators in the current study overestimated the approximate percentage of all fractures occurring to children during the first two years of life which are the direct result of physical abuse inflicted by an adult while only a fourth of the respondents knew the correct percentage. Most respondents indicated that 40 percent or more of the physical injuries suffered by children under the age of two were the result of physical abuse by an adult. The correct response was that approximately 25 percent of these injuries were caused by adults.<sup>1</sup> However, these same educators underestimated the percentage of children who are severely physically abused who were under the age of one year at the onset of abuse (question sixteen). Sixty percent felt that less than 65 percent of those severely abused children were under the age of one at the onset of abuse. Most experts in the field of child abuse seem to agree with Baldwin and Oliver's findings that approximately

---

<sup>1</sup>Helfer and Kempe, The Battered Child, p. 6.



75 percent of those who are severely abused physically were under the age of one year at the onset of the abuse.<sup>1</sup>

Almost 90 percent of the respondents were aware that when one child in the family is abused or neglected, there is a greater chance than exists in the general population that other children in the family will also be abused (question eighteen). Approximately the same percentage of educators were aware that most parents who abuse their children were abused as children themselves and/or raised with some degree of deprivation (question twenty-one). On the other hand, only about a third of the respondents felt that most of the parents who abuse their children were seriously emotionally impaired (question twenty).

Finally, approximately three-fourths of the respondents were aware that of the 6,500 cases of suspected child abuse reported in Iowa in 1978, children of school age (five years and older) were suspected of having been abused in more than 50 percent of these reported cases (question nineteen).

#### Results of Knowledge of Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law

As a group, teachers had a mean of 8.21 correct responses with a range of 3-12 and a s.d. of 1.91 from a

---

<sup>1</sup>Baldwin and Oliver, p. 203.

possible 14 on the section of the questionnaire regarding their knowledge of Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law.

Determination as to whether a particular response choice was the correct one was based upon the requirements stated in the Iowa law.<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this study, the teacher group included elementary classroom teachers, specially assigned teachers such as music and special education instructors. The administration group had a mean of 8.60 with a range of 5-11 and a s.d. of 1.65 while the support service staff had a mean of 9.40 with a range of 4-14 and a s.d. of 2.23. The administration group included principals and superintendents while the support service staff group included educators such as guidance counselors, speech clinicians, etc. A one-way ANOVA indicated a significant difference between these three disciplines at the .05 level of confidence ( $F=3.12$ ,  $d.f.=2$ , 125), and three t-tests for significance between means were applied in order to locate this significance. These data are summarized in Tables 4 and 5. A t-test between the knowledge that teachers and administrators have regarding Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law failed to indicate significance at the .05 level of confidence ( $t=.14$ ,  $d.f.=106$ ). A t-test between the knowledge that teachers and support service employees have regarding this law was statistically significant at the .05 level of

---

<sup>1</sup>Iowa, Code of Iowa, I, Chapter 232, 1979.

confidence ( $t=2.46$ ,  $d.f.=116$ ). A  $t$ -test between the knowledge administrators and support service staff employees have regarding the law was not statistically significant at the .05 level of confidence ( $t=1.00$ ,  $d.f.=28$ ). These data are summarized in Table 5. Thus  $H_2$ , there is no difference between the knowledge that administrators, teachers, and support service personnel have regarding the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law including the educator's responsibility for reporting suspected cases of child abuse, was rejected.

Table 4

One-Way ANOVA of the Knowledge Educators by Discipline  
have Regarding Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law

Components	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F
Between sets	23.67	2	11.83	$\frac{11.83}{3.79}$
Within sets	<u>473.70</u>	<u>125</u>	3.79	
Total	497.37	127		3.12*

\*Statistic significant at the .05 level.

The percentage of correct responses checked by the educators when considered as a total group is summarized in Table 6. Determination as to whether a particular response choice was the correct one was based upon the requirements stated in the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Iowa, Code of Iowa, I, Chapter 232, 1979.

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Tests of the Knowledge  
Teachers, Administration, and Support Service Staff  
Educators have Regarding Iowa's Child Abuse  
Reporting Law

Group	Mean	S.D.	df	t
Teachers	8.21	1.91		
Administrators	8.60	1.65	106	.14
Teachers	8.21	1.91		
Support Service Staff	9.40	2.23	116	2.46*
Administrators	8.60	1.65		
Support Service Staff	9.40	2.23	28	1.00

\*Statistic significant at the .05 level.

Only those questions from the questionnaire in which less than 40 percent or more than 70 percent of the respondents chose the correct response choice are discussed below.

As a total group, a little over a third of the educators responding to the questionnaire knew that the State of Iowa enacted its first child abuse reporting law between ten and twenty years ago (question twenty-three). Fifty percent thought that it had been less than ten years.

Ninety-three percent of the respondents were aware that not only medical personnel were currently required to report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect (question twenty-four). These educators were knowledgeable that teachers and other certified school personnel are required

Table 6

Percentage of Correct Responses by  
Educators as a Total Group

Questions*	Percentage N=128
23. Length of existence of Iowa law	40
24. Only medical personnel required to report	93
25. To whom teacher reports suspected case	88
26. If principal does not report case	40
27. What teacher does when principal does not report case to DSS	69
28. Fine for not reporting	49
29. Length of possible imprisonment	48
30. Whether photographs can be taken	48
31. When required to report	25
32. Whether sexual abuse is part of the law	73
33. Whether parent can sue for reporting	59
34. Possible civil damage suit	77
35. Number of hours within written report to be filed	44
36. Knowledge of ISEA's recommendation	82

\*For exact wording of each question, the copy of the questionnaire in the Appendix should be referred to.

to report cases of suspected abuse to children. On the other hand, there seemed to be some confusion as to when and where they were required to report suspected cases. Three-fourths of the sample population thought that they were required to report cases even when the knowledge of the abuse came to their attention outside of the school building and/or after school hours such as at the supermarket on a Saturday (question thirty-one). All of the administrators were in error in believing that teachers and other certified school personnel were required to report cases of suspected child abuse even if the information of the abuse is obtained in a nonschool setting (e.g., in a department store or on a weekend day).

Almost all (90 percent) of the educators responding to the questionnaire knew that they were required by law to report cases of suspected child abuse to the administrator at their school if such information came to their attention during the school day (question twenty-five). The law assumes that the administrator (or his/her designate) will make an oral report to the Department of Social Services and follow this up with a written report as prescribed by the child abuse reporting law in Iowa.<sup>1</sup> When the respondents were asked if the teacher or other certified personnel worker made a report of a case of suspected child abuse to the

---

<sup>1</sup>Iowa, Code of Iowa, 1979, pp. 1149-50.

building principal (or designate) as required by the law and the worker (teacher or other school employee) had reason to believe that the principal (or designate) would not relay (report) this information on to the Department of Social Services (DSS), what should this person do, 27 percent of the respondents felt that the teacher or other school worker should do something other than directly reporting the case to DSS. Most felt that this person should discuss the matter with the superintendent in preference to forgetting about it because he/she had met the law by reporting the case to the principal (or designate) (question twenty-seven).

Approximately 80 percent of the respondents were aware that an educator who fails to make a report of a suspected case of child abuse, that came to his/her knowledge during the school day, was open to a possible civil damage suit, as well as criminal action (question thirty-four). Approximately two-thirds of the same population knew that a person making a report in good faith was immune to a possible suit by a parent who was reported as abusing his/her child(ren) and upon further investigation it was that this was not the case (no abuse had taken place) (question thirty-three).

Approximately three-fourths of the respondents were aware that sexual abuse could be reported in Iowa as child abuse under the state's Child Abuse Reporting Law (question thirty-two). The remainder clearly stated that they did not

know whether sexual abuse could be reported under the present law.

The Existence of District Policy Regarding  
the Reporting of Suspected Cases of  
Child Abuse

Approximately one-half of the respondents checked "Don't know" when they were asked whether their school districts have written guidelines describing the procedures a certified school employee should follow when he/she wants to report a case of suspected child abuse and/or neglect (question thirty-seven). Slightly more than a third of the total sample indicated that their districts do not have written guidelines for making a report. Eight of the ten administrators responded that their respective districts do not have written guidelines to aid an educator in making such a report and outlining what procedures are to be followed. The other two administrators responding stated that they did not know whether such a written policy existed. Thus it would appear that the four school districts surveyed do not at the current time have written procedures describing how a certified employee should go about reporting a suspected case of child abuse in the district.

Educators who have Previously Reported a  
Case of Suspected Child Abuse

Approximately 22 percent of the total sample of educators surveyed indicated that they had personally reported



a case of suspected child abuse and/or neglect to their principal and/or the Department of Social Services at some time (question thirty-eight). The breakdown according to discipline was as follows:

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent of Discipline</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>
Teachers	15	15	16
Administrators	5	50	11
Support Staff	<u>8</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>16</u>
Total	28	22	43

A total of forty-three cases were reported by these twenty-eight individuals for an average of slightly over one and one-half cases reported per individual reporter. Fifty percent of the administrators and 40 percent of the support service group had reported a case of suspected child abuse previously while only 15 percent of the classroom teachers had done so.

Comparative Data Between Educators who have  
Previously Reported a Case of Suspected  
Child Abuse and Those who have not

In an effort to determine whether those educators who have previously reported cases of suspected child abuse were better informed about the specific aspects of child abuse and the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law examined in the current study, their knowledge levels were compared with those of educators who have not previously made a report of suspected

child abuse. As can be seen from Table 7, educators who have previously reported a case of suspected child abuse had a mean of 7.82 correct responses while those educators who have not made such a report had a mean of 7.61 correct responses on the section of the questionnaire that inquired about their knowledge of specific aspects of child abuse. A t-test for significance between means was applied, and it was not statistically significant at the .05 level of confidence ( $t=.56$ ,  $d.f.=126$ ).

Table 7

Means, Standard Deviations, and T-Tests of the Knowledge Reporters and Non-Reporters have Regarding Specific Aspects of Child Abuse

Group	Mean	S.D.	df	t
Reporters	7.82	1.81		
Non-Reporters	7.61	1.52	126	.56*

\*Statistic not significant at the .05 level.

The knowledge levels that previous reporters and non-reporters have regarding the Iowa reporting law were compared. Educators who have previously filed a report of suspected child abuse had a mean of 8.75 correct responses while educators who have not reported cases of suspected abuse had a mean of 8.34. A t-test for significance between means was applied, and it was not statistically significant at the .05

level of confidence ( $t=1.05$ ,  $d.f.=126$ ). These data are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Test of the Knowledge Reporters and Non-Reporters have Regarding Iowa's Child Reporting Law

Group	Mean	S.D.	df	t
Reporters	8.75	2.05		
Non-Reporters	8.34	1.77	126	1.05*

\*Statistic was not significant at the .05 level.

As can be seen from Tables 7 and 8, these results would seem to indicate the twenty-eight educators who have previously reported a case of suspected child abuse were slightly better informed about child abuse in general and the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law as examined in this study than those educators who have not reported cases of suspected abuse. However, this difference was not statistically significant.

In an effort to determine whether educators would report a case of suspected child abuse, two short vignettes were included as part of the questionnaire. The first one described a possible case of physical abuse to a first grade boy while the second vignette described a case of possible

neglect to a third grade girl.<sup>1</sup> As a total group, 55 percent and 57 percent of all the educators surveyed in the study indicated they would definitely report the vignettes as a case of suspected child abuse. These percentages were slightly higher than the 50 percent rate that would normally be expected given a would report/would not report choice. However, these differences were not statistically significant at the .05 level of confidence ( $\chi^2=1.13$  and  $\chi^2=2.53$ , d.f.=1).

Of the twenty-eight educators who had previously reported a case of child abuse, 64 percent indicated that they would report the case of possible physical abuse suggested in the first vignette while 53 percent of the educators who had not previously reported a case of child abuse indicated they would definitely report this vignette as a case of child abuse. The difference between the percentages of those who had previously reported a case of child abuse and those who had not done and indicated they would report this first vignette as child abuse was not statistically significant ( $Z=1.04$ ). On the other hand, 75 percent of previous reporters indicated they would report the vignette which described a case of possible neglect as child abuse while only 52 percent of those educators who had not

---

<sup>1</sup>The complete vignettes are included in the copy of the questionnaire in the Appendix.

previously made a report of suspected child abuse indicated they would report the second vignette. This difference was statistically significant ( $Z=2.17$ ).

### Discussion

The results of this study would seem to indicate that there was no significant difference between the knowledge teachers, administrators, and support service personnel have regarding the specific aspects of child abuse focused upon in this study and that support service staff appear to be significantly more knowledgeable than did the teacher group in their knowledge of Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law. This difference did not exist when the support service group was compared with the administration group nor when the administration group was compared with the teacher group. While the exact reasons why the support service staff were more knowledgeable about the law are not known, some of the school nurses and guidance counselors mentioned that they had received some information at a regional meeting of their discipline regarding the appropriate procedures to use when making a report of a suspected case of child abuse.

Some of the information gathered from the responses that the educators as a group make on the questionnaire would seem to indicate that most of them underestimated the incidence of child abuse in the United States, were unaware

that all fifty states have child abuse reporting laws, and knew that over 50 percent of the children who are abused are also attending school (kindergarten and above). Almost all of the educators surveyed (90 percent or more) knew that child abuse and neglect did not occur exclusively in lower socio-economic class neighborhoods; that most of the parents who abuse their children were themselves abused as children; and that once one child in the family is abused, there is a greater chance that other children in the same family will also be abused and/or neglected.

Some of the information that emerged about the knowledge that the respondents have regarding the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law were that almost all of the educators surveyed (approximately 90 percent) were aware that they are required to report suspected cases of child abuse and knew that the appropriate person to make the report to was the administrator at their school. However, there seemed to be some confusion on the respondents' part as to when and where they were required to report suspected cases. For example, three-fourths of the sample population thought that they were required to report cases even when the knowledge of the abuse came to their attention outside of the school building and/or after school hours such as at the supermarket on a Saturday afternoon. All ten of the administrators who participated in the study also indicated that certified school employees are required to report suspected

abuse in a nonschool setting such as on a Saturday afternoon. The law only requires educators to report cases of suspected abuse when the information comes to their attention during school day when they are performing their duties as a teacher or other certified school staff member.<sup>1</sup>

The educators as a group were also not clear as to what their legal responsibility is when they report a case of suspected abuse to their building principal and he/she does not pass (report) this information along to the Department of Social Services as the law requires the principal to do.<sup>2</sup> Part of this confusion is that the Iowa law does not indicate what a teacher or other certified school member should do when the principal does not report the information to DSS. Many of the respondents indicated that the teacher or other school employee should discuss the matter with the superintendent in preference to forgetting about it because he/she had met the requirements of the law by reporting the case to the principal.

Approximately one-half of the respondents did not know whether their respective school districts have written guidelines describing the procedures a certified school employee should follow when he/she wants to report a case of suspected child abuse and/or neglect and slightly over a

---

<sup>1</sup>Iowa, Code of Iowa, 1979, p. 1149.

<sup>2</sup>Iowa, Code of Iowa, 1979, p. 1149.

third of the respondents indicated their districts do not have such a policy. Since eight of the ten administrators surveyed indicated their districts do have such a written procedure and the other two administrators said they did not know, it would appear that the four school districts surveyed do not at the current time have written guidelines outlining how a certified school employee should go about making a report of suspected abuse.

Twenty-eight educators (approximately 22 percent of the total sample population) indicated that they had personally reported a total of forty-three cases of suspected child abuse. These twenty-eight individuals represented 50 percent of the administrators, 40 percent of the support service staff, and 15 percent of the teacher group surveyed. The data gathered in this study did not lend itself to explaining why so few teachers had reported a case of suspected child abuse previously to the building principal and/or the Department of Social Services. It is possible that these teachers were not familiar with the characteristics commonly associated with child abuse and neglect. On the other hand, since their respective districts do not seem to have any formal procedures to be followed in reporting cases of suspected child abuse, the teachers might have thought that they should only report cases where there was "definite" evidence of abuse.

Two vignettes, which described two possible cases of



child abuse and neglect, were included in the questionnaire to determine whether educators would report them as cases of suspected child abuse under Iowa's law. As a total group, a little over 50 percent of all of the educators surveyed indicated that they would definitely report the vignettes as cases of suspected child abuse. Those educators who had previously reported cases of child abuse indicated that they would report the two vignettes as cases of suspected child abuse at a higher rate than non-previous reporters indicated they would report these cases; one case being at a significantly higher rate.

#### Summary of Findings

The results of data gathered in this study would seem to indicate that the educators when grouped by discipline did not significantly differ in their knowledge of the specific aspects of child abuse examined in this study and in their knowledge of the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law except in one case. The support service staff group appeared to be significantly more knowledgeable than the teacher group in their knowledge of Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law.

Some of the information gleaned from the responses the educators made on the questionnaire would seem to indicate that most of the educators surveyed underestimated the incidence of child abuse in the United States, were unaware

that all fifty states have child abuse reporting laws, and knew that over 50 percent of the children who are abused are also attending school (kindergarten and above). Almost all of the educators surveyed (90 percent or more) knew that child abuse and neglect did not occur exclusively in lower socio-economic class neighborhoods; that most of the parents who abuse their children were themselves abused as children; and that once one child in a family is abused, there is a greater chance that other children in the same family will also be abused and/or neglected. There also did not appear to be any significant difference between the knowledge that teachers, administrators, and support service staff members have regarding the specific aspects of child abuse examined in the study.

Some of the information that emerged about the knowledge that the respondents have regarding the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law were that almost all of the educators surveyed (approximately 90 percent) were aware that they are required to report suspected cases of child abuse and knew that the appropriate person to make the report to was the administrator at their school. However, there seemed to be some confusion on the respondents' part as to when and where they were required to report suspected cases. The educators were also not clear as to what their legal responsibility is when they report a case of suspected child abuse to their building principal and he/she does not pass (report) this

information along to the Department of Social Services as required by law.

Approximately half of the respondents did not know whether their respective school districts have written guidelines describing the procedures a certified school employee should follow when he/she wants to report a case of suspected child abuse and/or neglect. Since eight of the ten administrators responding indicated that their districts do not have such a policy, it would appear that the four school districts surveyed do not at the current time have written guidelines outlining how a certified school employee should go about making a report of suspected abuse.

Approximately 22 percent of the educators surveyed indicated that they had previously reported a total of 43 cases of suspected child abuse to their principal and/or the Department of Social Services. These twenty-eight individuals represented 50 percent of the administrators, 40 percent of the support staff group, and 15 percent of the teacher group.

Slightly over 50 percent of all educators surveyed indicated that they would definitely report the two vignettes as cases of suspected child abuse. Educators who had previously reported a case of child abuse indicated that they would report the two vignettes as child abuse at a higher rate than did educators who had not previously reported a case of suspected child abuse.

## Chapter 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In an effort to assist children of school age who are or have been abused, it is important that teachers and other school employees recognize the symptoms and characteristics commonly associated with children who are abused and be knowledgeable of the procedures outlined in the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law so that appropriate services can be provided to these children and their families. To date, no formal research has been directed at the knowledge teachers and other certified school employees have regarding child abuse and the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law.

Only two related studies were found in the literature which examined the knowledge that professionals have regarding child abuse reporting laws. Swoboda et al., in a 1978 study of what knowledge mental health practitioners (psychiatrists, social workers, and psychologists) had regarding the Child Abuse Reporting Law in the state of Nebraska, found that a large number of the mental health workers were unfamiliar with the child abuse reporting law.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Swoboda et al., p. 453.

The Iowa Law Review is currently conducting a study of the knowledge and feelings that doctors, nurses, and social workers have regarding the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Statute and factors influencing their attitudes toward reporting suspected cases. The social worker group in this study included school social workers. However, the results of this study will not be published in the Iowa Law Review until some time in late 1981.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the current study, therefore, was to examine what knowledge certified school employees possessed regarding specific aspects of child abuse and the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law.

The results of the present study, which involved the administration of a questionnaire developed by the researcher to 128 educators in four west central Iowa school districts and the staff of the Area Education Agency serving these districts examined their knowledge of specific aspects of child abuse and Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law, provided the following findings.

### Conclusions

The results gathered in this study would seem to indicate that the educators when grouped by discipline did not significantly differ in their knowledge of the specific

---

<sup>1</sup>Personal communication between Dennis Ballard of the Iowa Law Review and the writer, April 1, 1981.

aspects of child abuse examined in the study and in their knowledge of the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law except in one case. The support service staff group appeared to be significantly more knowledgeable than did the teacher group in their knowledge of Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law.

The following hypothesis, therefore, was found statistically significant at the .05 level of confidence and was rejected:

$H_2$ : There is no difference between the knowledge that administrators, teachers, and support service personnel have regarding the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law including the educator's responsibility for reporting suspected cases of child abuse.

On the other hand, the following hypothesis was not found to be statistically significant at the .05 level of confidence and was not rejected:

$H_1$ : There is no difference between the knowledge that administrators, teachers, and support service personnel have regarding specific aspects of child abuse.

Some of the information gleaned from the responses the educators made on the questionnaire would seem to indicate that most of the educators surveyed underestimated the incidence of child abuse in the United States, were unaware that all fifty states have child abuse reporting laws, and knew that over 50 percent of the children who are abused are also attending school (kindergarten and above). Almost

all of the educators surveyed (90 percent or more) knew that child abuse and neglect did not occur exclusively in lower socio-economic class neighborhoods; that most of the parents who abuse their children were themselves abused as children; and that once one child in the family is abused, there is a greater chance that other children in the same family will also be abused and/or neglected. There also did not seem to be any significant difference between the knowledge that teachers, administrators, and support service staff members have regarding the specific aspects of child abuse examined in this study.

Some of the information that emerged about the knowledge that the respondents have regarding the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law were that almost all of the educators surveyed (approximately 90 percent) were aware that they are required to report suspected cases of child abuse and knew that the appropriate person to make the report to was the administrator at their school. However, there seemed to be some confusion on the respondents' part as to when and where they were required to report suspected cases. For example, three-fourths of the sample population thought that they were required to report cases even when the knowledge of the abuse came to their attention outside of the school building and/or after school hours such as at the supermarket on a Saturday afternoon. The educators were also not clear as to what their legal responsibility is when they reported

a case of suspected abuse to their building principal and he/she does not pass (report) this information along to the Department of Social Services as the law requires the principal to do. Part of this confusion is that the Iowa law does not indicate what a teacher or other certified school member should do when the principal does not report the information to DSS. The supportive service group seemed to be significantly more knowledgeable about the Iowa reporting law than the teacher group appear to know about the law.

Approximately one-half of the respondents did not know whether their respective school districts have written guidelines describing the procedures a certified school employee should follow when he/she wants to report a case of suspected child abuse and/or neglect and slightly over a third of the respondents indicated their district does not have such a policy. Since eight of the ten administrators surveyed indicated that their districts do not have such a written procedure and the other two administrators said they did not know, it would appear that the four school districts surveyed do not at the current time have written guidelines outlining how a certified employee should go about making a report of suspected abuse.

Twenty-eight educators (approximately 22 percent of the total sample population) indicated they had personally reported a total of forty-three cases of suspected child abuse. These twenty-eight individuals represented 50 percent of the administrators, 40 percent of the support service



staff, and 15 percent of the teacher group.

Two vignettes, which described two possible cases of child abuse and neglect, were included in the questionnaire to determine whether educators would report them as cases of suspected child abuse under Iowa's law. As a total group, a little over 50 percent of all of the educators surveyed indicated that they would definitely report the vignettes as cases of suspected child abuse. Those educators who had previously made a report of child abuse indicated that they would report the two vignettes as cases of suspected abuse at a higher rate than non-previous reporters indicated they would report these cases; one case being at a significantly higher rate.

### Recommendations

The information gathered in the current study seems to indicate that four major recommendations are warranted.

First, some type of inservice training should be provided to the educators in the four school districts and the AEA staff serving these districts regarding specific aspects of child abuse such as physical and emotional characteristics of children who are or have been abused as suggested by the Oakland County Intermediate School District and Colunni.<sup>1</sup> This type of information would assist the

---

<sup>1</sup>Oakland County Office of Prosecuting Attorney, pp. 16-17; Colunni, p. 99.

educators to better identify children who have been abused and neglected so appropriate resources could be made available to the students and their parents.

The second major recommendation is that a part of the inservice training should include a presentation devoted to describing the aspects of the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law and the procedures that need to be followed. Such detailed information as when and where reports are required and by whom and the type of information that should be included in a report would be covered during this portion of the inservice program. It is hoped that a representative from the local department of social services would be invited to participate in this section of the inservice. It is anticipated that this DSS representative would describe what procedures are followed once a report of suspected child abuse is received in the local office and some of the resources which are currently available in the community and surrounding area to assist children who are abused and their families. It is hoped that by providing the educators with a detailed description of the law and their (the educator's) legal responsibilities for reporting suspected cases of child abuse and allowing a representative from the department of social services to describe what happens once a report of suspected abuse is received by the department, the educators would be more knowledgeable of their legal responsibility in connection with suspected cases of child abuse and

be better informed as to what procedures are followed by the department of social services once a report is received.

The third major recommendation to be made upon the findings of the current study is that the four school districts, which participated in the study, should develop formal written guidelines that a school employee would follow when he/she suspects that a student has been abused and the manner that should be followed when making the report. Such detailed items should be fully described in the written policy statement as to whom (the principal, the school nurse, or some one else) the oral report should be made, who would contact the department of social services for the oral report, and who (the teacher, principal, or some one else) would write and send to the department of social services the written report. By the district having a written policy, each certified school employee would know what procedures are to be followed when he/she encounters a student whom he/she believes has been abused.

The last major recommendation is that the Iowa Legislature or the courts need to clarify what legal responsibility a certified school employee has after she/he has reported to the principal (or some other designated individual) that he/she has reason to suspect that a student has been abused and/or neglected. At the present time, there appears to be some confusion as to whether this individual has met his/her legal responsibility by notifying the

principal that a student is suspected of having been abused. The confusion arises when the principal fails to contact the Department of Social Services (DSS) with this information. The Child Abuse Reporting Law in Iowa only states that a mandatory reporter (a teacher during school hours, physicians, etc.) must notify the person in charge of the institution (the building principal, hospital administrator, etc.) of suspected abuse, but the law does not indicate what a person should do when he/she has reason to believe that the person in charge of the institution will not pass on this information of suspected abuse to DSS.<sup>1</sup> This failure to mention what action should be taken by the mandatory reporter (e.g., a certified school employee) when the person in charge (e.g., the principal) fails to contact DSS raises the question of what civil and criminal responsibility the mandatory reporter has for present and future injuries. In the interest of protecting the mandatory reporter's legal interests, some type of clarification of this situation (failure of the person in charge to notify the department of social services) is needed by the legislature, the court system, or the attorney general's office.

---

<sup>1</sup>Iowa, Code of Iowa, I, 1979, Chapter 232.69.

### Need for Further Research

The current study was conducted with educators in four west central Iowa school districts for the reasons previously stated in Chapter 3. In an effort to better evaluate the type of inservice training that is needed by educators in the entire state of Iowa regarding child abuse and the reporting of it to the department of social services, a similar study as the current one should be conducted with educators from the entire state of Iowa. The results of this type of study would enable future researchers to gain a more comprehensive assessment of the needs of educators in Iowa as a whole in the areas of the educators' knowledge of Iowa's Child Abuse Reporting Law and child abuse in general. It is hoped that the information gathered from a comprehensive study would enable the school districts to better serve students who have been abused and/or neglected.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

- De Francis, Vincent, ed. Protecting the Battered Child.  
Denver: American Humane Association, 1962.
- Fontana, Victor J. The Maltreated Child. The Maltreatment  
Syndrome in Children. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C.  
Thomas, 1971.
- Gil, David G. Violence Against Children: Physical Abuse  
in the United States. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard  
University Press, 1973.
- Helfer, Ray E., and C. Henry Kempe, eds. The Battered  
Child. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Child Abuse and Neglect: The Family and the  
Community. Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing  
Company, 1976.
- Kempe, C. Henry, and Ray E. Helfer, eds. Helping the  
Battered Child and His Family. Philadelphia: J. B.  
Lippincott Company, 1972.
- Smith, Selwyn M. The Battered Child Syndrome. London:  
Butterworths, 1975.
- Sussman, Alan, and Stephen J. Cohen. Reporting Child Abuse  
and Neglect: Guidelines for Legislation. Cambridge,  
Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1975.
- Van Stolk, Mary. The Battered Child in Canada. Toronto:  
McClelland and Stewart, 1972.

### Periodicals

- Adams, Wayne V. "The Physically Abused Child: A Review."  
Pediatric Psychology, I (Spring, 1976), 7-11.
- Auffret, Sarah. "Child Abuse in Mesa." Mesa [Arizona]  
Magazine, II (October, 1978), 9-21.

- Baldwin, K., and S. Oliver. "Epidemiology and Family Characteristics of Severely Abused Children." British Journal of Preventive and Social Medicine, XXIX (December, 1975), 205-21.
- Cohen, M. I., D. I. Raphing, and P. E. Green. "Psychological Aspects of the Maltreatment Syndrome." Journal of Pediatrics, LXIX (February, 1969), 279-84.
- Columni, Jr., N. D. "The Schools and the Problem of Child Abuse and Neglect." Contemporary Education, XLVIII (Winter, 1977), 98-100.
- Editorial. "Violent Parents," Lancet, II (November 6, 1971), 1017-18.
- Gil, David G. "What Schools Can Do About Child Abuse." American Education, V (April, 1969), 2-4.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Physical Abuse of Children: Findings and Implications of a Nationwide Survey." Pediatrics, XLIV (Suppl., 1969), 857-64.
- Gregg, G. S., and E. Elmer. "Infant Injuries: Accident or Abuse?" Pediatrics, XLIV (June, 1969), 443-49.
- Heins, M. "Child Abuse: Analysis of a Current Epidemic." Michigan Medical Journal, LXVIII (July, 1969), 887-91.
- Helfer, Ray E. "Why Most Physicians Don't Get Involved in Child Abuse and What to do About It." Children Today, IV (May/June, 1975), 28-33.
- Iowa State Education Association. "They're Crying for Our Help." Communique, XVI (February/March, 1979), 4-5.
- Johnson, B., and H. A. Morse. "Injured Children and Their Parents." Children, XV (March, 1968), 147-52.
- Kaleita, Thomas, and James H. Wise. "An MMPI Comparison of Child Abusers with Two Groups of Criminal Offenders." Pediatric Psychology, I (Spring, 1976), 76-78.
- Klein, M., and L. Stern. "Low Birth Weight and the Battered Child Syndrome." American Journal of Disorders in Childhood, CXXII (Winter, 1971), 15-18.
- Kempe, C. Henry. "The Battered Child and the Hospital." Hospital Practice, IV (October, 1969), 44-57.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Pediatric Implications of the Battered Baby Syndrome." Archives of Disorders in Childhood, XLVI (January, 1971), 28-37.



- \_\_\_\_\_, and others. "The Battered Child Syndrome." Journal of American Medical Association, CLXXXI (June, 1962), 17-24.
- Klaus, M. H., and J. H. Kennell. "Mother Separated from Their Newborn Infants." Pediatric Clinics of North America, XVII (November, 1970), 1015-37.
- Komisaruk, Richard. "Clinical Evaluation of Child Abuse: Scarred Families, A Preliminary Report." Juvenile Court Judge Journal, XVII (January, 1966), 66-70.
- Lukianowicz, Norman. "Battered Children." Pediatric Clinic, IV (July, 1971), 257-80.
- Lystad, Mary H. "Violence at Home: A Review of the Literature." American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, XLV (April, 1975), 333.
- Martin, David L. "The Growing Horror of Child Abuse and the Undeniable Role of the Schools in Putting an End to It." American School Board Journal, CLX (November, 1973), 51-55.
- McCaffrey, Mary, and Stephanna Tewey. "Preparing Educators to Participate in the Community Response to Child Abuse and Neglect." Exceptional Children, XLV (October, 1978), 114-22.
- Murdock, C. George. "The Abused Child and the School System." American Journal of Public Health, LX (January, 1970), 106-10.
- Normura, F. M. "The Battered Child Syndrome: A Review." Hawaii Medical Journal, XXV (September, 1966), 387-94.
- Paulson, Morris J. "Child Trauma Intervention: A Community Response to Family Violence." Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, IV (Fall, 1975), 26-29.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and others. "The MMPI: A Descriptive Measure of Psychopathology in Abusive Parents." Journal of Clinical Psychology, XXX (June, 1974), 387-90.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and others. "An MMPI Scale for Identifying 'At Risk' Abusive Parents." Journal of Clinical Psychology, IV (Spring, 1975), 22-24.
- Roundtree, G. "Some Aspects of Marriage Breakdown in Britain During the Last Thirty Years." Population Study, XVIII (1964), 147-63.

- Shanas, Bert. "Child Abuse: A Killer Teachers Can Help Control." Phi Delta Kappan, LVI (March, 1975), 479-82.
- Silver, L. B. "Child Abuse Syndrome: A Review." Medical Times, XCVI (October, 1968), 803-20.
- Simons, B., and others. "Child Abuse: Epidemiological Study of Medically Reported Cases." New York Journal of Medicine, LXVI (November, 1966), 2783-88.
- Spinetta, John J., and David Rigler. "The Child-Abusing Parent: A Psychological Review." Psychological Bulletin, LXXVII (April, 1972), 296-304.
- Swoboda, Joseph S., and others. "Knowledge of and Compliance with Privileged Communication and Child-Abuse Reporting Laws." Professional Psychology, IX (August, 1978), 448-57.
- Ten Bensel, Robert W., and Jane Berdie. "The Neglect and Abuse of Children and Youth: The Scope of the Problem and the School's Role." The Journal of School Health, XLVI (October, 1976), 453-61.
- Ten Have, R. "A Preventative Approach to the Problems of Child Abuse and Neglect." Michigan Medical Journal, LXIV (May, 1965), 645-49.
- Wall, Charles M. "Child Abuse: A Societal Problem with Educational Implications." Peabody Journal of Education, LII (April, 1975), 222-25.
- Wasserman, S. "The Abused Parents of Abused Children." Children, XIV (April, 1967), 175-79.
- Wright, Logan. "The 'Sick but Slick' Syndrome as a Personality Component of Parents of Battered Children." Journal of Clinical Psychology, XXXII (January, 1976), 41-45.
- Zalba, S. R. "The Abused Child--1. A Survey of the Problem." Social Work, XI (October, 1966), 3-16.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Abused Child--2. A Typology for Classification and Treatment." Social Work, XII (February, 1967), 70-79.

Other Sources

Ballard, Dennis. Personal Interview. April 1, 1980.

Department of Public Instruction. Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse: A Model Policy and Rules. Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Public Instruction, 1978.

Department of Social Services. "Statistical Data on Child Abuse Cases Reported to the State Department of Social Services, January-June, 1977." Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Social Services, July, 1977. (Unpublished Report)

\_\_\_\_\_. "Statistical Data on Child Abuse Reporting to the State Department of Social Services, July-December, 1977." Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Social Services, March, 1978. (Unpublished Report)

\_\_\_\_\_. "Statistical Data on Child Abuse Cases Reported to the State Department of Social Services, January-June, 1978." Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Social Services, July, 1978. (Unpublished Report)

\_\_\_\_\_. "Statistical Data on Child Abuse Cases Reported to the State Department of Social Services, July-December, 1978." Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Social Services, February, 1979. (Unpublished Report)

\_\_\_\_\_. "Statistical Data on Child Abuse Cases Reported to the State Department of Social Services, January-June, 1979." Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Social Services, February, 1980. (Unpublished Report)

Education Commission of the States. Education Policies and Practices Regarding Child Abuse and Neglect and Recommendations for Policy Development: Child Abuse and Neglect Project Report No. 85. Denver: Education Commission of the States, 1976.

Iowa. Code of Iowa, I, 1966.

\_\_\_\_\_. Code of Iowa, I, 1975.

\_\_\_\_\_. Code of Iowa, I, 1979.

Iowa Council for Children. "You Can Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect!" Des Moines, Iowa: n.p., n.d. (Pamphlet)

- Iowa State University, Cooperative Extension Service.  
"Child Abuse and Neglect: An Overview." Ames; Iowa State University, July, 1980. (Pamphlet)
- Kroger, N. A Survey of Physically Abused Children Known to Selected Hospitals in the Chicago Area. Publication No. 4008. Chicago: Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago, 1964.
- Lakin, Jean, Gerald Solomons, and Charles Abel. Child Abuse and Neglect: A Self-Instructional Text for Head Start Personnel. Iowa City, Iowa: Regional Child Abuse and Neglect Center, University of Iowa, 1977.
- Ninno, Michael. "Implementing the New York State Child Protective Services Laws: A Guide for Schools." A paper presented at the Annual International Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children, Atlantic, Georgia, April, 1977.
- Oakland County Office of Prosecuting Attorney. A Prosecutor's Handbook for School Administrators. Revised; Pontiac, Mich.: Oakland County, 1975.
- Skinner, A. E., and R. L. Castle. Seventy-Eight Battered Children: A Retrospective Study. London: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 1969. (Pamphlet)
- Webb, Diana. Instruction and Professional Development: Child Abuse. Des Moines, Iowa: Iowa State Education Association, 1979.

## APPENDIX

## THE QUESTIONNAIRE

## EDUCATOR'S INFORMATION SHEET

Directions: Please check the most appropriate choice(s),  
e.g., if you teach at both the junior and the  
senior high school levels, check both spaces.

## 1. Discipline:

- ☐ General education classroom teacher
- ☐ Administrator (Superintendent, Principal, Assistant Principal)
- ☐ Area Assignment Teacher (P.E., Music, Remedial Reading, etc.)
- ☐ Special education teacher (self-contained, resource room)
- ☐ Support staff (counselor, speech clinician, nurse, etc.)

## 2. Level:

- ☐ Elementary
- ☐ Junior High/Middle School
- ☐ Senior High

## 3. District:

- ☐ Adair/Casey      ☐ Guthrie Center
- ☐ Panora/Linden      ☐ Stuart/Menlo
- ☐ Heartland

## 4. Number of years in the field of education:

- ☐ Less than 5 years      ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 11-15 years      ☐ 16-20 years
- ☐ More than 20 years

## 5. Highest degree held:

☐ Less than a B.A.    ☐ B.A.    ☐ M.A.  
☐ Ed.S., M.S.W., 2 year Masters    ☐ Ph.D./Ed.D.

## 6. Gender:

☐ Male    ☐ Female

## 7. Age:

☐ Under 25    ☐ 25-29    ☐ 30-34    ☐ 35-44  
☐ 45-54    ☐ 55-70

## 8. Marital status:

☐ Single (never married)    ☐ Married  
☐ Widowed    ☐ Divorced or Separated

## 9. Number of children:

☐ None    ☐ 1    ☐ 2 or 3    ☐ 4 or 5  
☐ More than 5

## KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Directions: Please check the answer which you feel most appropriately answers the question asked.

Note: Mark only one answer per question.

10. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) has estimated that approximately \_\_\_\_\_ children in the United States are subjected to child abuse and/or neglect each year.

☐ Less than 25,000    ☐ 50,000-150,000  
☐ 250,000-500,000    ☐ More than 500,000

11. The abuse of children has been a public issue on the state and national levels (i.e., the enactment of reporting laws of suspected cases of child abuse) in the United States \_\_\_\_\_.

☐ Since 1920    ☐ Since 1935    ☐ Since 1950  
☐ Since 1965.

12. How many states in the U.S. have laws regarding the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1/2 \_\_\_\_\_ 2/3 \_\_\_\_\_ 3/4 \_\_\_\_\_ all of them
13. Most experts believe Child Abuse and Neglect exists primarily in families of lower social-economic status (SES).
- \_\_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_\_ False
14. It has been estimated by specialists in the area of child abuse that approximately \_\_\_\_\_ of all fractures occurring during the first two years of life are the result of physical abuse by an adult.
- \_\_\_\_\_ less than 20% \_\_\_\_\_ 20-40% \_\_\_\_\_ 40-60%  
\_\_\_\_\_ 60-80%
15. Since the founding of the U.S., children have always been regarded as individuals with legal rights by our court system.
- \_\_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_\_ False
16. In studying children who were severely physically abused, it was found that approximately \_\_\_\_\_ of them were under the age of one at the onset of abuse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Less than 20% \_\_\_\_\_ 20-40% \_\_\_\_\_ 40-60%  
\_\_\_\_\_ 60-80%
17. Most specialists in child abuse and neglect have found that \_\_\_\_\_ are abused and neglected.
- \_\_\_\_\_ more males than females  
\_\_\_\_\_ more females than males  
\_\_\_\_\_ about the same number of males and females
18. When one child in a family is abused, there is a greater chance, than exists in the general population, that other children in the family will also be abused.
- \_\_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_\_ False



19. Of the 6,500 cases of suspected child abuse reported in Iowa in 1978, approximately what percent involved school-aged children?
- \_\_\_\_\_ less than 15%    \_\_\_\_\_ about 25%    \_\_\_\_\_ about 50%  
 \_\_\_\_\_ about 75%
20. Most of the parents who abuse or neglect their children are seriously emotionally impaired.
- \_\_\_\_\_ True    \_\_\_\_\_ False
21. Most parents who abused their children were abused as children and/or raised with some degree of deprivation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ True    \_\_\_\_\_ False
22. Most parents who abuse their children are themselves very young.
- \_\_\_\_\_ True    \_\_\_\_\_ False

#### KNOWLEDGE OF IOWA'S CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAW

23. Approximately how long has it been since the State of Iowa enacted its first Child Abuse Reporting Law?
- \_\_\_\_\_ less than ten years    \_\_\_\_\_ 10-20 years  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 20-30 years    \_\_\_\_\_ more than 30 years
24. Under the Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Law, only medical personnel are required to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.
- \_\_\_\_\_ True    \_\_\_\_\_ False
25. If a teacher or other certified school personnel worker suspects that a child has been abused and/or neglected, he/she (the teacher) is to report this first to \_\_\_\_\_. Assume this information has come to this person during the school day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Department of Social Services  
 \_\_\_\_\_ The Child Abuse Hotline (telephone answering service)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ An administrator or the school nurse

\_\_\_\_\_ The police department or county sheriff's department

26. If the teacher or certified school personnel worker reports a case of suspected child abuse or neglect to the building principal (superintendent or school nurse), he/she (the teacher) does not have to report it to any other person or agency.

\_\_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_\_ False

27. If the teacher or certified school personnel worker reports a case of suspected child abuse to their principal (school nurse) and he/she has reason to believe that this person will not relay this information on to the Department of Social Services, he/she (the teacher or certified school personnel worker) should \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ Forget it as he/she has met the law by reporting it to someone at school

\_\_\_\_\_ Talk with the superintendent about this

\_\_\_\_\_ Directly report it to the Department of Social Services

\_\_\_\_\_ Directly report it to the police or sheriff's department

28. If the teacher or other certified school personnel does not report a case of suspected child abuse that comes to their knowledge during school hours, he/she can be fined up to \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ \$250

29. If a teacher or certified school personnel worker does not report a case of suspected child abuse and/or neglect that comes to their knowledge during school hours, he/she can be imprisoned up to 30 days.

\_\_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_\_ False

30. A school may legally take photographs (pictures) of a child who is suspected of having been abused or neglected in an effort to substantiate the making of a report.

\_\_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_\_ False

31. A teacher or other school personnel employee is required to report a case of suspected child abuse or child neglect whenever he/she has knowledge of or suspects that child abuse or neglect has occurred, even if it is outside of school hours or the school building (e.g., at the supermarket).
- \_\_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_\_ False
32. Can suspected cases of sexual abuse be reported under the Iowa Child Abuse Law?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know
33. A parent can sue a teacher or other certified school personnel worker if they (the parents) are reported as having abused their child(ren) as a result of a report filed by the teacher or certified school personnel employee and it is determined upon further investigation that the parents did not abuse their child(ren).
- \_\_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_\_ False
34. If a teacher or other certified school worker fails to report a case of suspected child abuse or neglect, he/she is open to a possible civil damage suit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_\_ False
35. A written report must be sent to the Department of Social Services within \_\_\_\_\_ hours of when the report was made orally to the Department.
- \_\_\_\_\_ no specific number of \_\_\_\_\_ 24 \_\_\_\_\_ 48
- \_\_\_\_\_ 72
36. The Iowa State Education Association recommends that a teacher should write a report for cases of suspected child abuse and neglect to be forwarded to the Department of Social Services even if the building principal says he/she will report it orally and in writing or shows you the report he/she is sending.
- \_\_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_\_ False
37. Does your district have written guidelines describing the procedures a teacher or other school personnel worker should follow if they want to report a case of suspected child abuse and/or neglect?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know

38. Have you ever reported a case of suspected child abuse and/or child neglect to the principal and/or the Department of Social Services?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

39. If your answer to question 38 was yes, how many cases have you reported?

\_\_\_\_\_

40. If this case came to your attention as a classroom teacher, would you report it as a case of suspected child abuse?

Tommy, a six year old, in your first grade class, comes to school with his right elbow bandaged loosely in dirty gauze. The skin on the elbow is separated about three inches in length and two inches in width. Yesterday this student's elbow was fine. When you asked Tommy about the injury, he said he fell off his bike while riding it yesterday afternoon. You also recall that about a week ago while offering a praising comment to Tommy for having all of his math problems done correctly, you happen to put your hand on his back as a pat on the back for a nice job done. Immediately Tommy jumped forward and said, "Ouch!" When questioned, Tommy said his back was sunburned. As this is early fall (late September--early October), you thought this was unusual but didn't question him any further.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would definitely report this case as suspected child abuse.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I would definitely not report this as a case of suspected child abuse.

If not reported as a case of suspected child abuse, what action, if any, would you take?

41. If this case came to your attention as a classroom teacher, would you report it as a case of suspected child abuse?

Mary, a ten year old in your third grade class, comes to school even in the middle of January when the temperature is below zero with a lightweight jacket on. She often misses school due to illness. From November to April every year, she has a runny nose. You and previous teachers have discussed the fact of Mary wearing a lightweight jacket during winter with Mary's mom. Mother says she can't afford to buy her a new jacket

and "anyways she wouldn't wear it." The school nurse has indicated to you that Mary has a slight vision problem and would like it to be further checked by an eye doctor to determine whether some corrective lenses are needed. The nurse has discussed this by phone with Mary's mother, and mom indicated they could not afford to run to the doctor every time the school wants them to. Possible assistance from the local Lions Club to pay for the eye exam and glasses if needed was refused by Mary's parents. You have also overheard in the teachers' lounge that Mary and her two-year-old brother are often left alone on Saturday nights from 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 p.m. (midnight) while the parents are off bowling. Of course, this is only a rumor and you have no first-hand knowledge of this. Outside of the lightweight jacket, the constant runny nose, and the slight vision problem, Mary appears to be okay physically though she is still a very quiet youngster.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would definitely report this case as suspected child abuse.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I would definitely not report this case as suspected child abuse.

If not reported as a case of suspected child abuse, what action, if any, would you take?